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CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN



CHRIST :
THE WISDOM OF MAN. (1928)

BY

A. BOYD SCOTT, M.C., D.D.

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DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
WITH GRATITUDE AND LOVE
TO THE MEMORY OF
SIR HENRY JONES

PREFACE

The primary purpose of this book is to attempt an investigation of the significance of Christ's moral wisdom. From many authoritative observers of religion the word has gone forth that the crucial controversy nowadays centres around the ethics of Christianity ; and it is in that field I venture to appear with this humble and tentative effort to set the problem in a just perspective. I seek to deal with the moral wisdom of Jesus Himself and to correlate it with the measures of the great ethical schools ; and, accordingly, comparisons are conducted between His teaching and that of such sages as the classical moralists, and Butler, Kant, Mill, Green, Bergson, Nietzsche, and others.

The enquiry is continued in a survey of the ethical " horizon " of Jesus ; and this I have sought to detect in a " spirit " within Him which is recessed beyond what is customarily called " religion " in general, and His " religion " in particular—a " spirit," indeed, in which may be discerned the radical *motif* not only of morality and religion, but of thought and art as well, and the restoration of which within the soul of man constitutes Christ's unexampled contribution to the significance and conduct of life. In this way He was " made wisdom unto us."

Thereafter, and of necessity, the enquiry deals with the relation between the revival of this " spirit " among men and that work He achieved of redemption from sin by His Cross, whereby He was also " made

PREFACE

righteousness unto us ” ; and a plea is consequently offered for a fuller recognition, than is customary in certain quarters, of the Church as the veritable Body of the living Christ and as the essential vehicle of His continuing Mission in the world.

The severest criticism which may be poured upon my book cannot increase the diffidence I already feel about many things in it. And I am well aware that the conclusions upon which I end the enquiry are very summarily presented and call for further elucidation. But my space was limited, so that I had to deny myself the attempt to make implications plainer and to justify certain statements which, as they stand, must strike the reader as somewhat dogmatic. Within the ethical portion of my book, too, I have been compelled, at particular places, to be more cursory than was right. For example, I had prepared and completed a section on the content of the Moral Consciousness and the bearing thereon of the mind of Jesus, which had to be left out. But I trust that what I offer may be regarded as, at least, a sincere and devout essay towards an intimate understanding of the spirit Christ was of, and towards a fresh appreciation of His personality and mission.

I desire to make affectionate acknowledgment of the industrious and very careful help given me by my friend, Miss Mary Noël Ross, in preparing my book for publication.

A. BOYD SCOTT

Midsummer, 1928

CONTENTS

PART ONE

<i>Preface</i>	PAGE vii
--------------------------	-------------

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

1. <i>The purpose of our enquiry</i>	3
2. <i>Books on " Christian Ethics " do not help us very much</i>	3
3. <i>Nor do treatises on ethics in general help us greatly</i>	4
4. <i>A further motive for our enquiry</i>	10
5. <i>The validity of the records</i>	
(1) <i>The sayings of Jesus</i>	13
(2) <i>The personality of Jesus</i>	19
6. <i>An analysis of the personality of Jesus in Mark. The seven ultimate characteristics</i>	24
7. <i>The partition of the ultimate characteristics of the personality of Jesus among his interpreters ; and the resultant one-sidedness of their theories</i>	38

CHAPTER II

JESUS CONSIDERED AS A TEACHER

1. <i>Jesus as a teacher</i>	47
2. <i>The inherent qualities of his Teaching :</i>	
(1) <i>Its positive character</i>	48
(2) <i>Its maieutic character</i>	49
(3) <i>Its inspirational quality</i>	49
(4) <i>The nature of its originality</i>	50
(5) <i>Its " poetical " character</i>	54

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

PART TWO

CHAPTER I

THE MORAL STANDARD AS LAW

	PAGE
1. <i>Jesus was confronted with Morality as Law</i>	65
2. <i>The Moral Law as the Law of the Tribe ; and the appreciation of it by Jesus</i>	66
3. <i>The Moral Law as the Law of God</i>	67
(1) <i>The Law of God as embodied in the Scriptures : the attitude of Jesus</i>	68
(2) <i>" Till all be fulfilled "</i>	69
(3) <i>Jesus and the " ideal " of the Law, and how he detected it</i>	73
4. <i>The Moral Law as the Law of Nature</i>	76
(1) <i>The Stoics</i>	78
(2) <i>Stoicism and the mind of Jesus</i>	80
5. <i>The Moral Law as a Moral Sense ; and the attitude of Jesus</i>	85
6. <i>The Moral Law as Conscience</i>	
(1) <i>Butler</i>	87
(2) <i>Jesus and Conscience</i>	88
(3) <i>Jesus and the immediacy of moral judgments</i> .	90

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL STANDARD AS LAW (Contd.).

1. <i>The Moral Law as exhibited by Kant</i>	
(1) <i>Kant and the function of Practical Reason</i> .	95
(2) <i>The first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, and its implications</i>	96
(a) <i>Its " rigorism." The attitude of Jesus compared</i>	97

CONTENTS

	PAGE
(b) <i>Its "formalism." The "golden rule" compared</i>	99
(c) <i>Its plea for " self-consistency " and that of Jesus</i>	101
(d) <i>" Sincerity " in Kant and Jesus</i>	102
(e) <i>The worth and dignity of the individual in Kant and Jesus</i>	103
(3) <i>Kant's further formulations of the Categorical Imperative and their implications</i>	109
(a) <i>" The Kingdom of Ends "</i>	110
(b) <i>Kant's comparison of the Kingdom of Ends and the Kingdom of God</i>	111
2. <i>The Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus</i>	
(1) <i>The present equilibrium of the problem</i>	117
(2) <i>Jesus assumed this term as the text of his teaching ; but there was a perplexing hiatus between " text " and " sermon "</i>	119
(3) <i>The Kingdom as " present " and objectively real</i>	121
(4) <i>The Kingdom as " hidden " and awaiting " discovery "</i>	123
(5) <i>The qualifications in those who would " find " the Kingdom</i>	125
(6) <i>This necessary address of spirit as discernible in the bearing of Jesus to Reality</i>	129
(7) <i>This may be described, but with great caution, as a " mystical " address</i>	134
(8) <i>Its designation by Jesus as " child-likeness "</i>	137
3. <i>Jesus and " Love " as the law of human nature</i>	
(1) <i>Compared with " reason."</i>	140
(2) <i>Illustrated in certain notable criticisms of Kant</i>	142
(3) <i>Kant's own appreciation of this in his reference to " imagination "</i>	144

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

CHAPTER III

THE MORAL STANDARD AS HAPPINESS

	PAGE
1. <i>Happiness as the normal and proper concern of life</i>	153
(1) <i>Few ethicists are at enmity with Happiness in some form, but not all are Eudæmonists</i>	155
(2) <i>The relation of Happiness and Virtue in Eudæmonism</i>	157
2. <i>Christianity and the ethics of Jesus criticized</i>	
(1) <i>By some as Asceticism</i>	158
(2) <i>By others as a morality of Rewards</i>	160
(a) <i>The Reward of "happiness in heaven." Jesus and "eternal life."</i>	162
(b) <i>The Reward of inclusion in the "apocalyptic kingdom"</i>	165
(c) <i>The Reward of felicity in the present life</i>	167
3. <i>The real nature of Happiness in the view of Jesus</i>	
(1) <i>The distinction of "happiness" and "blessedness" in Jesus and Kant</i>	177
(2) <i>Jesus and "joy"</i>	178
(3) <i>"Blessedness" or "joy" as illustrated in the "child spirit"</i>	179
(4) <i>"Blessedness" or "joy" as illustrated in Jesus' conception of "home"</i>	182
(5) <i>"Blessedness" or "joy" as illustrated in Jesus' conception of "re-birth"</i>	186

CHAPTER IV

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION

1. <i>Perfection took on a new significance as a result of the triumphant "doctrine of Evolution"</i>	191
(1) <i>The "continuity of all Nature, including man"</i>	192

CONTENTS

	PAGE
(2) <i>The result of this on all spiritual views of man's life. Reaction against it.</i>	193
2. <i>The ethical theory of T. H. Green</i>	
(1) <i>Its philosophical background</i>	194
(2) <i>"Self-realization"</i>	195
(3) <i>Jesus and "self-realization"</i>	
(a) <i>His kinship with Green</i>	197
(b) <i>The difference between them</i>	199
(4) <i>Further consideration of Green's conception of the "self"</i>	203
(a) <i>The social content of "self"</i>	204
(b) <i>The general bearing of the mind of Jesus on the above</i>	207
(5) <i>Green and the method of "self-realization"</i>	208
(6) <i>Jesus and the method of "self-realization"</i>	210
(7) <i>The principle of progress in Morality for Green and Jesus</i>	
(a) <i>Is Morality, as "institutional," static? No, says Green; it develops by "honest reflection" upon its present embodiment</i>	212
(b) <i>The similar effort of Jesus to awaken men to the "spirit" within the institutions</i>	214
(c) <i>But the instrument with Jesus is not "reflection" (which is doctrinaire), but "insight" of a prophetic type</i>	216
(8) <i>Three concluding observations on the relation between Green and Jesus</i>	
(a) <i>The intrinsic quality of man's nature as "mind" and as "love"</i>	219
(b) <i>Green's view that in no man may "self-realization" be entirely evinced.</i>	222
(c) <i>Green's view that "self-realization" is an "idea which does not represent previous experience"</i>	225

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

CHAPTER V

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION (*Contd.*)

	PAGE
1. <i>The revolt against the domination of Idealism</i>	231
2. <i>The consequent adjustment of Idealism and its persistence</i>	233
3. <i>The Italian Neo-Idealism : Croce</i>	234
(1) <i>The "zest" of Croce</i>	237
(2) <i>Croce compared in this with Jesus</i>	237
4. <i>We return to consider the impact of "Evolution" on ethical theory</i>	239
(1) <i>Certain forms of "evolutionary ethics" are simply old friends in new clothes, or are theories, long quiescent, which have taken advantage of the confusion wrought by "Evolution" in the spiritual world, to revive in new forms</i>	240
(2) <i>Examples of these two classes above, briefly indicated.</i>	241
5. <i>The New Vitalism</i>	247
(1) <i>Bergson :</i>	
(a) <i>His approach to reality</i>	248
(b) <i>His interpretation of reality</i>	249
(2) <i>Bergson's "Intuition"</i>	250
(a) <i>Its relation to "intellect"</i>	251
(b) <i>Its likeness to Jesus' mode of apprehending reality</i>	252
(c) <i>But these two modes (of Bergson and of Jesus) must not be identified. Their divergence described</i>	254
6. <i>The bearing of Bergson's philosophy on Ethics</i>	256

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VI

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION (Contd.)

	PAGE
1. <i>The ethical theory of Simmel</i>	261
(1) <i>Jesus and values in life</i>	263
(2) <i>Jesus and the attainment of "life"</i>	265
2. <i>The ethical theory of Nietzsche</i>	268
(1) <i>The motives of his doctrine</i>	271
(2) <i>His criticism of Christian morality</i>	
(a) <i>His treatment of "Pity"</i>	272
(b) <i>Compared with that of Jesus</i>	274
(c) <i>"Love" in Nietzsche and Jesus. The</i> <i>"golden rule." "Neighbours." "Love</i> <i>of our enemies"</i>	279
(3) <i>The consummation of Man in Nietzsche and</i> <i>Jesus</i>	283
(a) <i>Nietzsche and the Kingdom of Man</i>	285
(b) <i>Jesus and the Kingdom of God</i>	287

PART THREE

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND SYSTEMATIC IN ETHICS

1. <i>Jesus' wisdom of life and the ethical schools</i>	293
2. <i>Is his wisdom "systematic" ?</i>	
(1) <i>Not in the customary sense</i>	294
(2) <i>But his wisdom has an "horizon"</i>	295
(3) <i>The "horizon" as truth, goodness, beauty</i>	296
(4) <i>The "horizon" as God</i>	299
3. <i>Morality as independent of a "world-view"</i>	301
(1) <i>Morality involves a "world-view"</i>	302
(2) <i>The "world-view" as theistic</i>	303
(3) <i>The "world-view" as religious</i>	306

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

CHAPTER II

IS RELIGION THE ETHICAL SECRET OF JESUS ?

	PAGE
1. <i>The uncertain connotation of the word Religion</i>	311
(1) <i>This is a comparatively recent perplexity</i>	311
(2) <i>Religion made subservient to Theory</i>	314
(3) <i>The revolt under Schleiermacher</i>	314
2. <i>The definition of Religion</i>	316
3. <i>Is Religion, as thus defined, the ethical secret of Jesus ?</i>	319
(1) <i>Contemporary rites and religious societies as affected by Jesus</i>	320
(a) <i>The "institution of the Lord's Supper"</i>	323
(b) <i>Did Jesus found a religious community?</i>	324
(2) <i>His relation to the theology of his time</i>	326
(3) <i>His relation to the religious spirit of his time</i>	327
4. <i>Further consideration of the significance of Religion</i>	329
(1) <i>Religion as an independent spiritual interest</i>	330
(a) <i>Rudolf Otto</i>	331
(b) <i>Religion as engaged with a "fourth value"</i>	333
(2) <i>Religion as an issue (with three others) of an "original wholeness" of spirit</i>	336

CHAPTER III

"PIETY"

1. <i>An effort to locate the "original wholeness" of spirit</i>	343
(1) <i>It may be traceable historically as Aidos</i>	343
(2) <i>It may be traceable anthropologically</i>	344
(a) <i>Marrett and the spirit of primitive man</i>	346
(b) <i>Andrew Lang and "primitive monotheism"</i>	347
(c) <i>The belief in a "golden age"</i>	348
(d) <i>Modern anthropology and the "golden age"</i>	350

CONTENTS

	PAGE.
(3) "Piety," a convenient name for the unitary address of man's spirit to reality . . .	353;
(a) "Piety," derivation and description . . .	354.
(b) "Piety," illustrated in W. H. Hudson . . .	354.
 2. The differentiation of "Piety"	 357
(1) The emergence of religion, morality, thought, art . . .	357
(2) The differentiation was inevitable, but perilous . . .	359
(3) Mankind's longing to recover the lost harmony . . .	360

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AND "PIETY"

<i>Jesus and "Piety"</i>	367
1. The age was ripe for the Spirit that was in Jesus . . .	368
(1) The limits and loneliness of Religion . . .	368
(2) The limits and loneliness of Morality, Science, Art	369
(3) The intervention of Jesus	372
 2. The achievement of the "Piety" of Jesus	 373
(1) "Piety" as explicative of that quality of his spirit which concerned us throughout our ethical quest	373
(2) "Piety" as the secret of his morality	377
(3) The bearing of the "Piety" of Jesus on :	
(a) Religion	381
(b) Thought	384
(c) Art	385

CHAPTER V

A NECESSARY SUPPLEMENT TO OUR ENQUIRY

<i>A necessary supplement to our enquiry</i>	391
1. Jesus and the communication of his Spirit	392

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

	PAGE
2. <i>Jesus and his engagement with Evil</i>	394
(1) <i>His recognition of himself as Redeemer</i>	397
(2) <i>His cancelling of Sin</i>	398
(3) <i>The renewal of his mission of "Piety"</i>	402
(a) <i>Middleton Murry's view of Jesus "the Teacher" and Jesus "the Saviour"</i>	403
(b) <i>His continuance with his disciples</i>	404
(c) <i>His need of a "Fellowship": the significance of the Lord's Supper</i>	406
(d) <i>The "Church" as the veritable Body of Christ</i>	407
3. <i>The Church as the channel of the transfiguring Spirit of Christ.</i>	409
(1) <i>The transfiguration of Morality</i>	410
(2) <i>The transfiguration of Art</i>	411
(3) <i>The transfiguration of Thought</i>	414
(4) <i>The transfiguration of Religion</i>	419
<i>Index of Gospel References</i>	429
<i>Index of Quotational References</i>	431

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>The purpose of our enquiry</i>	3
2. <i>Books on " Christian Ethics " do not help us very much</i>	3
3. <i>Nor do treatises on ethics in general help us greatly</i>	4
4. <i>A further motive for our enquiry</i>	10
5. <i>The validity of the records</i>	
(1) <i>The sayings of Jesus</i>	13
(2) <i>The personality of Jesus</i>	19
6. <i>An analysis of the personality of Jesus in Mark. The seven ultimate characteristics</i>	24
7. <i>The partition of the ultimate characteristics of the personality of Jesus among his interpreters ; and the resultant one-sidedness of their theories</i>	38

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

§ 1. *The purpose of our enquiry.*

What place may be found for Jesus and his ethical wisdom within the schools of moral thought? An answer to this question is the initial proposal of the present enquiry. We shall endeavour to compare the ethical standards of the Nazarene teacher with those that stand forth as beacons of life's contents and rules in the balanced text-books of ethics, and thus try to estimate the nature and importance of the gift he added to the moral treasury of mankind. Where within the circle of ethics does Jesus stand?—as one on the circumference of it, numbered as first or last, according to the point at which we choose to “number off,” or, in accordance with the judgment of his devotees, as one at the very centre of the circle, so set that the contributions to ethics which all the others make come in as radii to him and meet in him as their synthesis or pivot?

§ 2. *Books on “Christian Ethics” do not help us very much.*

It were an impertinence to suggest that this quest has not already been attempted; and yet, if you array the books that undertake to unfold in an orderly fashion the teaching of Jesus, you shall be put to it to find those that try to relate his ethics to the Schools.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

When this is offered, it is not so much the personal ethics of Jesus that is thus related, as an enlarged morality that goes by the name of Christian Ethics ; and, even so, the display of the relation is too often of a somewhat perfunctory kind. The late Dean Rashdall complained of this.¹ Furthermore, in books that treat of Christian Ethics, we are, as a rule, engaged straightway with a personal ethics of Jesus which melts into the "religion" of Jesus. On the threshold of our enquiry we are told that the religion and ethics of Jesus so cohere that they cannot be separated ; to attempt to cut them apart reveals, so soon as the knife acts, a cross-section in which religion and ethics are as one. The religion of Jesus is hailed as the truly vital thing in that coherence ; and his ethics, when all is said, are the workaday plane of its practice. Now all this may turn out to be as so stated. But it is worth while trying to distinguish them for the end we have set ourselves, and also for another reason to which we shall come presently. It may be we shall find in the end that "the moral and the religious elements can at no point be separated."² But the author of that very pronouncement begins his book by asserting that "it is the permanence of the moral teaching which has ensured the identity of the religion amidst all changes."³

§ 3. *Nor do treatises on ethics in general help us greatly.*

On the other hand, might we not be helped by enquiring what place the morality of Jesus occupies in the esteem and deliverances upon it of the Schools themselves ? Well, I fear that if we set out to

¹ Hastings Rashdall : *Conscience and Christ*, p. 6.

² E. F. Scott : *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 38.

³ *ut sup.*, p. ix.

"CHRISTIAN ETHICS"

enquire among them with this confidence we shall be rather coldly received. Indeed, among the scholarly disciples of Jesus one of their shrewdest complaints against all the academies and porches, or nearly all of them, is a neglect or perfunctory regard of his morality which is less easy to bear than the splendid antipathy and full-orbed scorn which surge against it from such an one as Nietzsche. There is ground for this complaint. The ethical treatises, taken as a whole, have not done justice to the intervention of the teacher called Jesus in the moral affairs of mankind.¹ As *moderne* a prophet as C. E. M. Joad who shouts cheerfully to us from the camp in which he has put Schopenhauer, Bergson, Shaw, Wells and Bertrand Russell in thrall to his own world-view, has caustic observations to make upon the snobbery (it is not otherwise than that, in his judgment) of those ethical pundits who, with levitical neglect, pass by all ethics that "are not tricked out in philosophical garb, defended by dialectical methods, and maintained on logical grounds."² As instances of such ethics thus coldly condemned, he points to Swedenborg, "and even Schopenhauer," and Jesus Christ. Nay, further, he avows that "it is in part to the refusal of philosophical ethics to take cognizance of such systems, that its barren and abstract nature may be attributed."

I remark further that the modern schoolman in ethics is hardly fair even to what is generally called Christian Ethics. There is no more just delineator of systems than Henry Sidgwick; but even he, when he sets out to include "Christian Morality," in his historical survey, leaves one of his readers, at least,

¹ See Newman Smyth: *Christian Ethics*, pp. 5, 6.

² C. E. M. Joad: *Commonsense Ethics*, pp. 78, 79.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

with the impression that he has had to turn aside to deal with a movement in thought and life which runs off from the main career of ethical culture. He has nothing to say of the ethics of Jesus. Even T. H. Green himself, in the notable 5th chapter of his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, effects little more than a use of the Christian contribution to ethics as an illustration of the way in which the traditional Christian view of life may bear out the idealistic type of morality he has rescued from naturalism.

There are several reasons for this philosophical neglect of Jesus and the contribution, such as it may be, which he has to offer to ethics. One reason of it can readily be found in that view of Christian ethics as a religious compound to which I have already referred. The stern ethicist turns coldly to any invasion of his field by the name and claims of religion. So frigid, indeed, is his attitude that ethics which come to him trailing clouds of an apocalyptic cult such as Christianity is supposed to be, are quietly ignored or simply set aside as of no real concern at all to men who have their own scientific ideas of ethical definition and enquiry. A second reason is to be detected in the obedience of philosophers to what is fashionable in their circle ; even philosophers may be slaves of fashion. The Schools issue from Greece in all things, and in ethics not least. To teachers and teaching outside the apostolical succession which derives from the Hellenic mind, they sit with a negligent pride vaticanical in its severity. When they undertake their ethical survey, they go to the Acropolis as to Sinai. Those who complete their pilgrimage thither—for some leave their bones in that hallowed realm—come homeward by the shrine of Epictetus and, leaping the centuries, alight at

NEGLECT OF JESUS' ETHICS

Hobbes's front-door. Hobbes himself, in the array of his ethical enquiry, fell in at the rear of the Stoics and Epicureans as though history were an ethical blank between.

Such ethicists have some defence. They have avowed that the only Christian Ethics which come the way of their enquiries, when they trouble to enquire about it, is the moral philosophy of the Church—a moral philosophy which any who care to investigate it find to be little more than the ancient ethics gradually annexed and camouflaged as Christian. There is something to be said for this. Hatch says a great deal for it.¹ He maintains that in the early days of the Christian affair, its ethics fell quickly on decay; the ideals of life current in the ancient world continued to obtain, although slightly raised; the rules of conduct by which men had been accustomed to regulate their daily walk and conversation continued, with modifications. The spring-like and vital impulsiveness of the Galilean spirit faded, and instead of the higher righteousness and holiness in which that blossomed, with the promise of a rare refreshing fruit in the world, the old conceptions of virtue and the old tabulations of duties, re-asserted themselves, and, after a brief arrest, choked those new growths.

I concede that it is open to anyone to declare that Christian morality, as that has been recognisable in almost the whole course of its history, is either a legalism indistinguishable in essence from any other legalism, or a system which stole its essential substance from such sages as the Stoics, however portentously it may have decked it out in Christian symbols and categories. Such contentions are defensible; they

¹ Hatch: *Influences of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, pp. 169 ff.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

provide something of an excuse for the ethicist to pass by the Nazarene morality as a thing lost in oblivion and therefore negligible. But this will hardly do, if there exist in this world to-day even a "remnant" who avow that it is not from Christian Ethics as so described that they derive their appreciation of life and the motives of conduct, but from the pristine teaching of Jesus himself, from the direct counsels for life and conduct which they think they can gather satisfactorily enough from that table-talk of his and his topical utterances which are recorded in those primitive biographies called the Gospels, and, further, from the inspiration of the spirit he was of, as that is still exhaled from those mellow parchments.

This presupposes, of course, our ability to come readily at the actual ethical teaching of Jesus in the Gospels. But just here lies another reason for that neglect of his morality by many ethicists with which we are dealing, and, accordingly, another defence on their part of that indifference. They complain of the paucity and uncertainty of the records. Both points are well enough taken. The first, however, is not one that need unduly affront those who are invited to explore the wisdom of Jesus, since they never take it thus amiss that the relics of Socrates, for example, are scanty enough in all conscience! It is not in the multitude of words the god speaks: the oracle is sparing of eloquence. Ten brief sentences have sufficed to create a national soul. Among our own kin the wise have desired to beget the songs of our firesides, let who will play the part of Justinian! Better a sonnet with a fertile notion in each of its fourteen lines than the whole tribe of the dunciads! The uncertainty of the records is a harder point to blunt; but let that be laid aside meantime.

WISDOM OF JESUS UNSYSTEMATIC

Another count in the defence of those who pass by the moral wisdom of Jesus has to do with its unsystematic character. Such, in appearance at any rate, it certainly is. Unfortunately by such a gesture we dismiss sundry others at the same time—Socrates again, for example, and kindred triflers such as Epictetus and the like! I wonder if even Plato would remain to us. Even in his case, is it not a commentary on the difficulty of tabulating precisely what he meant in those dramas of the soul he called his Dialogues, that we can hardly see him now for commentaries? A. E. Taylor declares that “the indispensable preliminary to a real comprehension of Plato’s personal thought would seem to be a careful collection of all the notices of his oral teaching to be found in Aristotle, and a confrontation of them with all the similar records of such notices by Xenocrates and other Academics as still survive in the commentaries of Simplicius and other men of learning in later antiquity. This preliminary work has only been systematically undertaken within the present century . . . and the task cannot be said to have advanced beyond its bare inception.”¹ This is very suggestive. It suggests that, in the case of Plato, the philosopher must begin by working in that precise field which, in the case of Jesus, is presented in the Gospels, and which is scorned by many as a wilderness containing little else than a few haphazard wild flowers! Certainly there is not in the *memorabilia* of Jesus anything in size or shape that we can forthwith lay alongside the display of ethics as given in Aristotle, or Spinoza, or Kant, or in any of the customary text-books on morality. But the difference between the exhibition of moral wisdom in the

¹ A. E. Taylor: *St. Thomas Aquinas as a Philosopher*, p. 19.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

gospels and that of ethics in treatises, and the difference between the exhibition of moral wisdom in Socrates, or even Plato, and that of the elaborated text-books, are really differences of degree, and not of kind.

§ 4. *A further motive for our enquiry.*

Before I say something of the validity, for the words and personality of Jesus, of those sparse little records, I desire to set down here that additional motive of our enquiry at which I hinted a little ago. It concerns the agitation felt by many to-day lest the residuary moral wisdom of Jesus should go the way of the general debacle that has befallen (or so we are told) the religious dogmas and rituals of Christianity. Theology and all the priestliness of worship are at a low ebb. The world, we are assured, has now no concern with God, and least of all with the pseudo-philosophy which creed-makers and confession-mongers have built about the notion; and sacraments are merely magic such as primitive man formulated in his ghost-infested age.

All this contempt and dismissal, however, has to do with Christianity as a "religion," its theology, cults and priesthoods. Its day as such, it would appear, is done. This has often been said, and quite as fiercely and assuredly long ago in the time of Celsus. Mill was as confident of it as any, and so were Mazzini and all the other secularist giants of the 19th century. Their criticism, however, had its limits. It blew upon theologies, altars and mitres, but it was careful to maintain the sheltering wall behind which mankind might continue to reverence Jesus as "the morally perfect being" and his moral wisdom as the final and abiding standard and guide

CHRISTIAN MORALITY ASSAILED

of practical life. Thus do Mill and his family retire within the ruins of Christianity and maintain themselves in the moral teaching of Jesus, just as certain people have made a secular dwelling-house in the attenuated buildings which once were great abbeys.

But nowadays both these refuges are threatened and indeed assailed. The moral side of Christianity is no longer regarded as an indissoluble residuum of that religion. So widely developed indeed is this attack that we may accept the judgment which declares that "at this moment it is the ethics of Christianity which is more unpopular than the creed."¹ The attack is now applied to that residuary morality which is thought to remain when all that goes loosely by the name of "religion" is stripped from it, and the "secular" deposit is revealed. It is applied to that "common-sense Christianity" which some consider they have found in the Sermon on the Mount. In that collection of the homiletical tuition of Jesus a resting-place has been found by many who still affirm their Christian loyalty apart from theological entanglements.

Shall the Christian loyalists, then, be driven from this field too as from a last rally-tower? It is for them to look to it. Certainly they cannot lightly regard this penetration of the citadel, to which so many of them have retreated. It may seem to them a secondary thing that the customary theologies and the dry and wrinkled relics of paganism that linger in Christian altars and vestments, have come badly out of the fires of modern criticism, so long as the moral ideals and motives of Jesus the sage are seen by them to remain unconsumed and unconsumable, or, if seemingly destroyed in the general

¹ J. N. Figgis: *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, p. 58.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

holocaust, to have arisen like the Phœnix from the ashes. But they cannot thus quite console themselves in view of that ruthless handling of the "common-sense" of the gospel, to which reference has just been made. And yet they may take heart of grace, not only in the strength of their own domestic defences,¹ but also in encouragements that come their way from outside, and sometimes from unexpected quarters there.² No more remarkable an encourager of the Christian loyalist in his valiant counter-attack could be found than Thomas Hardy, that bleak devotee of religious agnosticism. Towards the end he issued a collection of his lyrics, introduced by a preface which has the look of that vast and brooding soul's last will and testament to his spiritual heirs. There he indulges the following mournful prophecy: "A forward conjecture scarcely permits the hope of a better time, unless men's tendencies should change. So indeed of all art, literature, and 'high-thinking' nowadays. . . . We seem threatened with a new Dark Age." And further on he utters this reflection: "One may ask what other purely English establishment than the Church, of sufficient dignity and footing, and with such strength of old association, such architectural spell, is left in this country to keep the shreds of morality together."³

It would seem, therefore, to behove those who have anything to do with that forlorn hope to which Hardy looks with tenuous confidence, to set ardently about consolidating their position and arraying their advance. From the description of the field which

¹ Cf. Peile : *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 23.

² Cf. H. Jones : *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 93; E. Caird : *Evolution of Religion*, II, pp. 371, 372.

³ Thomas Hardy : *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, pp. xiv, xvii.

THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

I have already attempted, it would appear that a primary concern of theirs must be the setting in order of their *ethical* positions, for thither the enemy has penetrated after what he regards as irretrievable victories in the realm of religion, theology and cult. The battle—so wise observers, as we have seen, declare—is in the province of morality to-day. The real concern and confusion of this age, as Lord Haldane avers, are not so much religious or even intellectual, as moral.¹

§ 5. *The validity of the records.*

We shall turn now to consider the uncertainty, already noted, as to whether we have in the records of Jesus the due and reliable account of his history and his utterance, which alone can give us a sense of security in exploring and defining his wisdom for life.

§§ 1. *The Sayings of Jesus.*

In considering, first of all, the sayings of Jesus, I think it may be safely said that the judgment of a level-minded criticism nowadays is more and more prepared to declare their general reliability, so far, at least, as the Synoptic Gospels (*Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*) are concerned. *Mark*, in particular, is being accorded a degree of historical realism and simple validity which reassures our dependence upon it.² The fashion of relegating the Gospel oracles to the apologetic or controversial creativeness of the apostolic period is wearing thin, and is once again threadbare among us, all the more so since Burkitt has given us his measured studies in this problem.

¹ See Haldane : *The Conduct of Life*, p. 14.

² See Major : *Jesus by an Eye-Witness*.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

He is brought to believe that the tendency of criticism has out-run itself, which discounts the Gospels and Acts as the elaboration of an age that has discoloured, beyond all hope of recovery, the pristine page of the evangelical history, by the hardening lines of ecclesiastical developments and the brush of "church" controversies. "I am not holding a brief," he says, "for the inerrancy of the Gospels. Words have doubtless been ascribed to Jesus which He never uttered. I own that I regard Matt. xxviii, 18-20 among them. But I think such words were written down for Him because they seemed (in the opinion of the Evangelist) to be historically appropriate, not, first and foremost, because they were present-day watchwords of controversy."¹

Of the present-day standing of the Teaching let us take Harnack as our arbiter. As long ago as 1897 he emerged from a study of the New Testament more profound than any that have engaged contemporary students, with the following confession: "The results of my investigations go in a reactionary sense far beyond what one might call the moderate position in the criticism of to-day. The most ancient literature of the Church is, on all chief points, and in the majority of details, veracious and worthy of belief from the point of view of literary history. . . . The problems arising from the criticism of the sources . . . as well as the difficulties in the way of constructing true history, will probably present themselves, in a few years, under an aspect essentially different from that they bear to-day, to the majority of competent critics."² We may safely say that this prophecy has come true. James Moffatt is certainly one of those

¹ F. C. Burkitt: *Christian Beginnings*, 1924, pp. 135 f.

² Quoted by Gore in *Belief in God*, p. 185.

THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

“competent critics”; and he has declared that “we are justified in concluding that these four gospels offer an adequate store of material for knowing what Jesus was and what Jesus taught.”¹

Dubiety continues to prevail as to the legitimacy of appealing to *John* as a dependable source in our quest for the actual utterances of Jesus. But here too the familiar judgment which assigns it to a world that is entirely alien to the Galilean *memorabilia*, is not quite so secure as it once was. Nevertheless the authorship of John the Apostle is not greatly defended among present-day scholars. The deposit of their various judgments may be taken to be something like this: The author is a philosopher of a mystical frame of mind who, in contact with the Apostle John in Ephesus, embraced the faith of his teacher, and thereafter endeavoured with enthusiasm to divulge that intellectual and emotional amalgam which his spirit had gathered both from the simple narrative of John and the radiant devotion John continued to show in his talks about Jesus, and from his own philosophical quality of mind. I wonder if we must remain content with this. Certainly we must agree that the view taken of Jesus in *John* is what is conveniently called a “mystical” view; and certainly the abiding impression which we receive of Jesus in Paul is of the same character—Deissmann, it seems to me, has put this on a sure footing. But it is entirely possible that there were elements in Jesus which created that impression from the very first, although the Synoptics may not have captured it sufficiently to utter it. Something other than that which they were able to describe in their *memorabilia* of Jesus

¹ Moffatt: *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 193. cf. E. F. Scott: *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 10 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

may have been experienced by them—that something which persisted in the tradition and was at length successfully uttered in *John*. *John* is “Pauline,” if you like ; but the “Pauline” Christ which it is now fashionable to detect in *John* may have been the Christ with whom Paul came into contact at the very outset of his Christian career, and not merely the Christ he attained to after he had run the course of those successive interpretations which Inge, rightly or wrongly, traces in the sequence of his Epistles. Paul on the road to Damascus met Christ. The Christ he met there was one very like the Christ who moves and speaks in *John*. I don’t care how you interpret the words “met Christ.” In Paul’s “vision,” however interpreted, we may have evidence, at the very outset of what is taken to be the development of a subsequent “mystical Christology,” of an interpretation of Jesus, and a responsiveness to him, such as we detect in *John*. It may be one of the chief splendours of Paul that it fell to him to catch and conserve a conception of Jesus which was by no means alien to the experience of the first believers, but which was so volatile, when the expression of it in words was attempted, that the effort to utter it might very well have failed the collectors of reminiscences of Jesus, and so, apart from Paul and *John*, might have ceased to be made.

In *John*, in spite of his “artistic” treatment of his theme and his adjustment of it to his “contemporary philosophy,” we may have a presentation of Jesus that is historically valid. It may very well be the belated conservation of the tradition of a quality in the mind and attitude of Jesus which was fully experienced and appreciated among those raconteurs who gave of their reminiscences to the authors of the

THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

Synoptic Gospels, but which baffled their prosaic and faltering powers of description. Let us agree, if you like, that *John* crowns Paul; but let us also regard it as not improbable that the essential account of Jesus in *John* is not a derivative from Paul and the "Pauline theology," but the fixing at last of a tradition about Jesus which goes back to the Galilean witnesses, but which might very well have lapsed, had not interpreters capable of catching and expressing it appeared in Paul and in the author of *John's* Gospel.

The just and attentive reader cannot, I feel confident, go through these four little memoirs without recognizing a unity of teaching which is unmistakable. You may still think I go too far when I include *John* in the result of the test. Certainly the reader, as he enters *John*, is aware of a climatic change; there is a radiance about it as from a world not immediately identifiable with the familiar fields through which the Synoptics lead us; he has a sense of a different supernaturalism. But I cannot believe that the ordinarily adjustable mind of him who reads ever starts back from *John* as from a book to be set altogether aside from the row in which the Synoptics stand together. Truly *John* is distinctive, but not in the way of exhibiting Jesus with such a halo as is absent from him in the others. The reader has already, in the Synoptic Gospels, come across rays in the words and actions attributed to Jesus there, which, after a little reflection, he detects as the glinting indications of what he finds so definitely suffused in enveloping radiance about Jesus in the Johannine Gospel. At least that is my own abiding impression, reached after that open-minded reading of the four memoirs for which I pled a short time since. In saying this I am encouraged by a like disclosure of impressions recorded

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

recently by Lord Charnwood.¹ He is evidently equipped in New Testament scholarship, but came to *John* as "any man who had read and enjoyed a considerable variety of great literature, who had not for long read this Gospel straight through, and who sat down to do so with a fresh mind and so far as possible as he would read any other good book." The result of such a perusal, not by any means unattended by a real acquaintance with the critical problems that entangle the book, is his conviction that the Christian belief was from the start as it appears in this Gospel and in the Epistles of Paul. Let me be presumptuous enough to add to this, that, in pursuing such an approach to the four Gospels, the unprejudiced reader will find, or so I am convinced, that when he reaches and passes through *John*, he has entered a realm in which he finds a satisfaction afforded his mind for a whole series of aspiring questions which were awakened in him as he companied with Jesus in the Synoptics. *John* is the secret of the Jesus in *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, revealed.

I have no thought of slipping away from this subject as though there were not very great difficulties in sorting out the records which show Jesus to us. There are many difficulties. These concern the various angles at which the Evangelists approach their exhibition of Jesus; they meet us also in discrepancies in the narrative, confusions in the sequence of events, divers phrasings of utterances which sometimes leave reconciliation at a loose end, and the like, but none of these so bites into the composite record as really to disorganize it. They are manageable rents, if you like, in the composite vesture of the story, not such clashings of design and

¹ Lord Charnwood : *According to St. John*.

THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS

colour in the inwrought pattern of it as would prompt us to toss it aside as unfit for use. The reader finds himself able, by means of the needle and thread of an ordinary imagination, so to adjust the severances, that something like one pattern and design is readily traceable through the whole. He is left with an impression upon his mind of a common purpose in the four Gospels, and of one type of teaching therein.

§§ 2. *The personality of Jesus.*

May we take it, then, that in these records we have an adequate view of what Jesus spake? I think so. But what of their adequacy to the personality and activity of Jesus? We seek to be sure of this, because, for one thing, as the most casual perusal of the records makes plain, the Teaching and the Man are so intertwined throughout that we cannot abide sure of the speeches so long as the spirit of the speaker is uncertainly or vaguely known to us. Besides that, we can never make a good beginning in balancing for judgment the moral or religious allocutions of any teacher, until we know something of the man himself, his walk and conversation, the course he took through life, his general bearing and behaviour, his assortment with his own teaching. We go some way, for example, in our essay to know what Spinoza taught when we have stood by him in the ghetto, and so, too, with Herbert Spencer as he turned a deaf ear to the piano!

Can we depend, then, on the records to set Jesus himself consistently before us? Moffatt, as we have seen, thinks so. But listen to this! Montefiore in the introduction of his laborious and judicial book on the Synoptic Gospels, writes, "I would like to quote here the measured statement of the great philosopher Wundt . . . 'No unprejudiced person,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

who is only tolerably familiar with the ways in which myths are formed, and who has also fairly followed the growing discovery and elucidation of the sources of old oriental legends, can to-day any longer doubt that with the exception of a few incidents in the narrative of the Passion, which probably possess an adequate historical attestation, the outward life of Jesus is a tissue of legends. But that which these legends leave untouched, and that which is never found in their mythological counterparts and predecessors, is the series of sayings and speeches of Jesus as these have been handed down to us in the Synoptic Gospels.'''¹ . . . I wish I could write like that! The resounding and portentous oracle of Delphi is a fool to it! But the god overreaches himself. It would take a larger literary divinity to carry out successfully the division between the tender lambs of the "sayings and speeches" of Jesus and the bearded goats of the legends of his life, which Wundt has accomplished so pontifically. He has his work cut out for him who seeks so to cleave asunder the words from the acts of Jesus that the Teaching can stand apart as something self-contained and intelligible in its isolation.

I don't think we need trouble ourselves with the fantastical theory that Jesus never existed at all. In its complete form this theory seeks to maintain that Jesus is the issue of pagan myths of various kinds wedded to Jewish fancies, and that no such historical person as the man of Nazareth ever tabernacled in the flesh.² In a less extreme form, such a theory is found among those who prefer to regard Jesus as the outcome of

¹ C. Montefiore : *The Synoptic Gospels*, Vol. I, p. 7.

² See, for summary and criticism of this moonshine, Berguet : *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, ch. IV. ; or Figgis : *Civilisation at the Cross Roads*, pp. 285 ff.

KIRSOPP LAKE'S VIEW OF JESUS

a *symbolistic* creativeness on the part of a primitive religious society which emerged as the historical Church, rather than the outcome of that *mythical* creativeness, to which I have just referred. We have met with this already in our enquiry, and we have seen some reason to suspect its worth. It does indeed admit the presence and activity of a man in Galilee and Jerusalem called Jesus, but it declares that we cannot hope to recognize him in the unearthly symbolism which the cult, that somehow became attached to him, collected about him. Dean Inge joins issue with this shrewdly and unsparingly. He proclaims that it leaves us with no more than "a mild specimen of the Mahdi type, an apocalyptic dreamer whose message consisted essentially in predictions about the approaching catastrophic 'end of the age', predictions which, of course, came to nothing. The Jesus whom they draw is a psychological monster, a person who could never have existed, still less have founded a great religion."¹ This scornful challenge is met by Kirsopp Lake—and, indeed, it is to him and his fellows the Dean throws down the gage.² The "Anglo-American" scholar, as Inge calls him, regards the Dean's appreciation of his position as "perverse and absurd," and, altogether, the controversy is quite a pretty one. Lake avers of Jesus (1) that "in his *public* teaching he claimed to be a prophet, inspired by the spirit of God," and that he certainly regarded himself as a prophet; (2) that he *may* have taken himself to be the Davidic Messiah—"though the evidence seems to me against this view"; (3) that he may have thought of himself as "the Son of Man who would come at the end of

¹ Inge: *Outspoken Essays* (2nd series) p. 51.

² See *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1924, pp. 5 ff.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the world to judge the living and the dead,"—but of this Lake says, "Though I incline against this view there is much to be said for it"; and (4) that there was nothing in or about Jesus which afforded legitimate ground for the belief, which attached itself to him afterwards, that he was a "lord" who conferred "regeneration and life through sacraments," or that he was the incarnate Logos of God.

This is a negative portrait indeed, well-nigh as negative as that in photography which shows black and white reversed. It leaves a Jesus not far removed from the impatient description already quoted from Inge. And it is difficult to avoid Inge's avowal that it is reached along a line of presuppositions and, it may be, prejudices, which relegate all in the accustomed records of Jesus that does not consort with it to that convenient factory of symbolistic constructions, the "early Church." In the hands of those with whom Lake consorts, such a theory removes at once from historical use the Gospel of *John*; it cuts ruthlessly into *Luke* and *Matthew*; it suspects with decision such stray passages in *Mark*, the primitive Gospel, as beget a thought in us that Jesus was other than a prophet with an alarmist message about the "end of the age." But what is it guides that surgery along the lines it follows thus mercilessly? It cannot be "textual criticism" of a fair-minded kind; because such criticism cannot do other than leave us with a record, in *Mark* at any rate, that is primitive and close to the events which it offers to narrate. It cannot be a touchstone applied to the record from other histories, for of such histories we have none. The course such surgery takes can only be justified if such a hiatus can be disclosed between *John* or *Paul* and the record in *Mark*, and

THE "RESIDUARY JESUS"

intermediately between *Luke* or *Matthew* and the record in *Mark*, as to show that the seeds of the later conception of Jesus are absent in *Mark*, or, if present, must be removed as secretions from a later time. As to the second of these alternatives, there may be certain invasions of the record in *Mark* which come from the thought and interpretation prevalent in the post-Galilean period ; but let not these be described by that unscientific method which begins with pre-suppositions as to "what alone can be," and let not passages or phrases be excised from *Mark* until it is unmistakably clear that they are surds, out of sympathy with the tenour of that Gospel and alien to its general presentation of Jesus. As to this, can we say that the seeds of the later conception of Jesus are absent from *Mark*? Can we read that Gospel, making all allowance, as we read, for those passages and phrases which certain scholars regard as later accessories, without the conviction growing within us that the transition from the image of Jesus therein to that which appears in the later Gospels, is by no means *per saltum*, but bears the aspect of a proper development, or, as we may see ground for believing, bears the aspect of further and fuller reminiscences of Jesus being added to *Mark*, together with the reasonable elaboration of notes and characteristics that are inherent in *Mark's* presentation of Jesus.

I cannot believe it true to say, as many say, that the "residuary Jesus" in *Mark* is no more than a "prophet," with some relative degree of the "spirit of God," who uttered a few idealistic epigrams based on natural history, and rattled himself and a few others with "dooms" in the traditional fashion of the prophets of his race. That is not the pervasive flavour of this man throughout *Mark's* Gospel. Even

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

in such unsuspected and casual references to him there as his severest diminishers would allow to stand in the record of the primitive Jesus, there is a spirit and a savour of personality, which does not consort with the figure to which they would reduce him ; and the *total* impression is one to which these critics do no manner of proper justice. The only way to test this is to read the Gospel of *Mark* in the way in which Lord Charnwood read *John*, or in the way in which G. K. Chesterton counsels us to approach the records. "I must try," he says, "to imagine what would happen to a man who did really read the story of Christ as the story of a man ; and even of a man of whom he had never heard before. And I wish to point out that a really impartial reading of that kind would lead, if not immediately to belief, at least to a bewilderment of which there is really no solution except in belief."¹

§ 6. *An analysis of the personality of Jesus as given in Mark. The seven ultimate characteristics.*

It were not a bad thing to make this experiment with the Gospel of *Mark* ; and this I propose to do. Look at this new book then ! Right away we are ushered within a realm of abounding *energy*, both in happenings and in personalities. This impression simply beats upon our attention, and it is sustained to the end of the story, nay, it grows in force as the tale goes on. The personality of Jesus fills up at once before us with that energy. The episode of the baptism is a crisis of self-revelation and "call," so abrupt and forceful that what now stirred in him "drove him immediately into the desert" (i, 12) to hammer out his farther course with such violence that the

¹ Chesterton : *The Everlasting Man*, p. 211.

JESUS AS REVEALED IN MARK

debate is described as one with Satan. This energetic emergence knows no diminution on his return to carry forth the purposes which now fill his soul. He takes the reader's place in the synagogue at home and his words carry such "authority" (i, 22, 27) that they are "astounded at his teaching." Those whose minds are the victims of disorder and violent prepossessions tremble before him and cry out as against a volcanic intensity. People with bodily diseases flock to him as to a spring of primæval vigour. But, as soon as this energy breaks upon our attention, we recognize that there is nothing intolerant, or arrogant about it, nothing of the Napoleonic bearing of the superman. Its procession is attended with a sunny kindliness, an almost casual *mirthfulness*. His first word to those who threw in their lot with him is a happy jest: "Come, follow me, and I will make you fish for men" (i, 17). This spirit is never quenched even to the close of his career; in the scene of the arrest in the garden by the palace guard, he deals with them with a self-possession that is humoursome (xiv, 48). I don't know if we can go all the way with Chesterton in his detection of what he calls the "mirth" of Jesus; but there is much in what he writes—"I say it with reverence; there was in that shattering personality a thread that must be called shyness—something that he hid from all men when he went up on a mountain to pray . . . something that he covered constantly by abrupt silence or impetuous isolation . . . and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth." ¹

From a personality in any way so composed of energy and humour there issues inevitably an attitude to "mice and men" that is *humane*. The word is an

¹ Chesterton: *Orthodoxy*, pp. 296 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

imperfect one ; but it helps, at least, to include the further note in the personality of Jesus which our reading of the story discloses to us. On the one side we have a character which surged with vigour of movement and speech so palpably that once he was said to be off his head, so august that only twice did he have advice given him by others, so imperially that only once did anyone presume to pity him, and even so he would not have it. On the other side we have a humoursome kindliness towards man and beast which has the air of sunshine in springtime about it. We read in another place (Matt. v, 45) that he conceived of God as making His sun to shine impartially on the evil and on the good ; this image was born of the disposition of his own spirit. It is Bousset, I think, who likens the spirit of Jesus to the sun, a conflagration within, but in its effect on the things of earth genial and sweet.

From this quality of the humane within the soul there issues, as we may notice among men who evince it, a *common-sense* which turns upon life and the ways of mankind with the unshaded radiance of white light. As we continue to read the Gospel of *Mark* this trait is very clearly exhibited to us in Jesus. It is a common-sense in him that is lucid, placid, unwavering, well-nigh staring. It is the full measure of that "innocent stare," detected by some in St. Francis of Assisi, before which the swollen pomps of great houses and their princes stand foolishly. His common-sense is so radical that many a time it comes at first with a shock upon us ; but a moment's reflection lets us see its simple and stark reality. Thus he dealt with those who are called "demoniacs." They were regarded, and regarded themselves, as tenanted by a "spirit" other than their own. Whether

THE COMMONSENSE OF JESUS

that was the case or not need not concern us, although those who condemn this belief may be recommended not to pass it by until they have heard what "modern psychology" has to say of the disruptions and dis-possession of personality. But with Galilean demoniacs what other course in relieving them might common-sense suggest than the course that Jesus followed, namely, to command the usurper to come out of them? So he commanded, and so they came out! Many other instances of this frank and unembarrassed common-sense of Jesus in his dealings with people might be given: as, for example, his dealing with first things first in the case of the paralytic to whom he said, "My son, your sins are forgiven" (ii, 5), or the homely sanity of the domestic direction he gave when the "little girl" was restored by him to her parents (v, 43). But it is in certain of his pronouncements and aphorisms on conduct that this quality blooms most radiantly before us. Reflection upon the ways of life as we know and experience it goes a long way to prepare us for those guidances of his which to the unreflective may appear quixotical and impracticable. It does not take long for a man who digs at all deeply into experience to see that no one can become rich in the enduring values of life whose spirit is absorbed in money or the envy of money, or to detect that those who nourish impurity in their breast cannot *see anything*, least of all "God," or to know that, in dealing with others, there is no finality for those who act on the principle of the vendetta. In these and kindred engagements with life we are none of us devoid of that gleam of insight which is held as in a permanent and steady flame of truth and sheer common-sense in the wisdom of him who said "Blessed are they who feel poor in spirit," "Blessed

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

are the pure in heart," "You are not to resist an injury; whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well" (Matt. v, 3 ff.). This mood and behaviour of his are, in his judgment, so obviously the way of life that he can afford to treat it whimsically, trusting that common-sense and happy humour, inherent in the average man, will appreciate it and respond. The bearing which is indicated in the customary phrase "Now, as man to man!" is the native bearing of this evangelist of unembarrassed sanity.

If you have caught, as you cannot fail to catch, that quality of radical common-sense, with its flavour of happy humour, in the spirit of Jesus, you will be prepared to detect the tincture in it of bright *irony* as well. In its sunnier mode it is kindly and genial; but there are fields of its operations in which it moves through severity to something very like acidity. These graduations depend on the character of the intercourse he has with various types of interlocutors or assailants. It is needless to indicate examples. They range from the homely irony of his references to patching old clothes or decanting in old wine-skins (ii, 22), to the austere and pungent derision of his reference to hale men seeking physicians (ii, 17), or Satan turning his sword upon himself (iii, 23). There is an ironic intolerance in this bright humourist of all dullness that hardens itself in insensibility, of all pettifogging conventionality, of all the discourtesy that lurks in snobbishness, of all parsimony that calls upon prudential economy to crib and confine the native lavishness and fecundity of the hospitable heart of man. More than once he seems almost brusque to those with whom, in their lumbering endeavour to keep pace with his message of simple

THE IRONY OF JESUS

sanity, we cannot but sympathize : he said to them almost testily " Don't you understand ? " (viii, 17). Consider, too, the final gesture of spurning he instructed his evangelists to make against the hostile cottages and towns (vi, 11).

But you will see that this irony is not of that puritanical kind which is so austere and refined that all come under its sting or lash save those men, their beliefs and practices, who are ready to fall in with it on the alpine levels of its own frigid spirituality. He never ceases to be the humanist we have found in him. To men and women who, sincerely applying to him, cannot divest themselves of homely old beliefs and practices, even such as we in our purged and self-sufficient wisdom call " superstitions," he is tolerant in a way that is kindly and understanding. When, in healing a blind man, he " did spit on his eyes " (viii, 23), or when, in another case, he " spat and touched his tongue " (vii, 33), or when he made a plaster with clay and spittle wherewith to treat a blind man's eyes (John ix, 6), or when he was not affronted when a woman thought that virtue would flow from him to her, could she but touch the tassel of his robe (v, 28), we are in contact with one who, while he dealt in scorn with the intellectual and moral superstitions of the *illuminati* of his tribe, responded to the ancient quackery of the children of Mother Earth with a heart that understood and a tolerance as of one of them.

There is here something of that attitude of the great gentleman to the divers companies and types of men, which the Greek sage counselled as fitting and due. And we do indeed catch in him a quality for which no more apt term than *aristocratic* may be found. It is this that lies at the heart of the irony

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

we have been considering. It is savoured in all the great revealers of the eternal values. Aristotle evinces it, although in him it is too characteristically Greek to be identified with that spirit in Jesus, without drastic qualifications. It is more aptly felt in Plato. I think that the Christians in the course of their survey of pagan wisdom were prompted to claim Plato as their own, not so much on the basis of his teaching, although they did that confidently enough, but rather because they sensed that indefinable thing, a kinship of spirit between their Master and the great Greek.¹ It is not in any extreme or far-fetched way we call this spirit, at the fountain of it, aristocratic. Truly we cannot allow it to suggest that to Jesus, as to Aristotle, there were levels of mankind which are no real concern to the "rulers." This kind of lordly contempt of the "vulgar" is poles apart from the spirit of Jesus. At the same time we cannot read the Gospel without detecting a temper in him that may justly be termed aristocratic. The subservience of those called "demoniacs" is itself an indication of a certain lordliness in him, as of a prince who has chosen to go among men unknown; but other and more practicable signs of this abound. He referred to the culpably dull and the inimical as "these outsiders" (iv, 11). In his speech to his fellow townsmen in Nazareth, when they jibbed at him (vi, 4), there is the regal spirit of one who is pathetically affronted that his own tribe could not recognize the emergence of such an one as himself from their common nobility in the realm of God. When the Pharisees took his people to task for their crime among the corn (ii, 23), he faced them with a

¹ Harnack: *What is Christianity?* p. 69. cf. Benjamin Jowett: *The Dialogues of Plato*, "Georgias," II, 302.

THE ROYALTY OF JESUS

sunny majesty which claimed the prerogative of King David himself. And his subsequent pronouncement (ii, 28), that " the Son of man is lord even over the sabbath " (if, as I doubt not, the reference is to himself), pulls aside momentarily his peasant gown and shows a flash beneath of some mysterious vest of principality.

The simple and almost ingenuous narrative is haunted with this mystery of royal origin and prerogative. He gives the impression of one who has strayed into Galilee, as might a prince wander disguisedly about his realm, finding it to be, in unexpected regions, what he thought it to be, and amazed to discover its signs and institutions defective where he had looked to find them realized and functioning in full. He addresses scribe and pharisee as might such a prince deal with traitorous vassals of whom he had the right to expect a fidelity and a vision of lordship like his own ; he engages with humble folk, who lingered within the simple ways of this patriarchal ancestry, with pastoral intimacy. We have the feeling that he begins his quest with an expectancy and hope that he shall find his fellow-peers ready to recognize in Galilee a realm of the divine presence and purposes which is clearly more real to him than the royal state of Solomon. We feel the breath of disappointment steal upon his spirit. The tinge of irony and princely reserve appears in his face and the sharpness of it in his words. That secret of his spirit which he had surmised was so thinly veiled from them at the first, is held now in abeyance, and withdrawn to the interior of his brooding heart ; it is guarded now, lest it should be plucked forth by unintelligent hands and given to the havoc of mundane politics ; it is kept in store for such souls among the unsifted multitude as might yet open their eyes and

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

see the simple glory of that obvious realm of the blessed which, as he found, so few had eyes to see.

What was that secret of his? The Gospel of *Mark*, by which, in all I have thus presented, we have remained in touch, does not succeed in making it patently open. It may be reasonably surmised that no book or hymn can achieve this: the simplest and most transparent soul among the children of men keeps its own secret! But the hymn of *John* is the biggest effort towards that end; and that is the elaboration and harmonics of stray melodies in *Mark* which catch at the mystery in the soul of Jesus. Even in *Mark* they strike with something of a gong's note in the traving confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi (viii, 29); in the strange episode called the Transfiguration (ix, 2), they issue with orchestral beauty; in the procession of palms (xi, 8), they rise as from a band of legionaries on the march; in the declaration before the Sanhedrin (xiv, 61), they take the sound of such trumpets as herald the Judgment.

I can make nothing of these things if I am denied the right to find the intimation of an ancestry which breaks in upon the peerage in which Jesus and Plato and the other aristocrats of the human spirit are installed, with such a rupture of descent as can only be healed by tracing this Jesus to a source that is lost in the mysteries of "heaven."

But we are still engaged in defining to ourselves the impressions that the personality of Jesus makes upon a frank and unprejudiced reader of the primitive record in *Mark*. The last we detected was that which we called an aristocratic cogency. I pass forward to remark that a soul so informed, and a soul misunderstood and balked as that of Jesus was, takes an inevitable course. It withdraws within the

THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF JESUS

circle of its own high visions and purposes, and more and more regards the manners and policies of the aberrant world with an unconcern that is broken only by prophecies of consequential woe. Through this phase we are led by the record in *Mark*. He retired from the multitude; he practised concealment; he would not that any should know of his whereabouts (ix, 30), for it was now his resolve to "teach his disciples," by which is clearly meant that maieutic process of intercourse of soul with soul, and that socratic dealing with them, whereby he hoped that the eyes of some, at least, might open to the light by their own volition, for he was forbidden by the laws of the spiritual realm to prise them awake—not for such the clay and the spittle of material forcefulness! When, throughout this long and exhausting tuition, he turned his attention to the statecraft of his nation, it was with the air of one who is compelled to let things swing. Not altogether! The concern of a disinherited prince for his dissolving realm breaks forth upon his lips from time to time. But his general manner is now one of direful detachment. He entitles his nation "this disloyal and sinful generation" (viii, 38), "a faithless generation" (ix, 19); he sees with tragical clearness whither they are heading. Disaster waits upon their policies, the disruption of the ancient covenants, the overthrow of Zion, the culmination of the age that began with the patriarchs and ran its perilous course in the blood and sweat of prophets. He foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem and announced it, together with a *judgment* upon the "people of God," so alarmist, ruthless and final, that it meant nothing less than the end of an exhausted world. Against this monstrous background of doom, his spirit still stood erect and pierced it, as with a

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

thin rapier of lightning, in an unabated confidence in the promises of God and in his own function within the purposes of God. There is, however, no thought of ultimate failure in such spirits as his. He had sung his song and shot his arrow into the air, and there, as in vacancy, they appeared to pass away. But he knew he would find them again, the one making melody in humble hearts so possessed by it that the chorus would yet reach heaven and the confines of this disharmonious world, the other, feathered by the wings of angels, and lodged in the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. In the high passion of this confidence he laid hold on the harp of his people's poets and prophets, and plucked a bowstring from it to wing his words. Thus he dared to proclaim in answer to the scornful question of the high priest of his nation, "Are you the Christ?"—"I am! And, what is more, you will all see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (xiv, 62). "What is more!"—is not this the gesture of one who cared not how much more deeply these men might sink in their muddy misunderstanding of his princely mission; the challenge, almost casual, well-nigh reckless, to men who lived in another world altogether from his; the irony of a man who almost went out of his way to confirm the blindness of their eyes and the hardening of their hearts, by tossing to them an oracle from their holiest prophecies which they had lost the power to interpret? Within the mighty imagery of that theophany this prophet, who had helped his folk to trace in flowers, in the wings of birds, and the ways of children, the presence and the descents of the divine, now chose to take his stand as who should say, "Is it in the tumult of

JESUS THE MARTYR

clouds and in heavenly thrones you look to see the realm of God arrive? Behold, thus shall you indeed witness it!" But they could not understand.

In all this there is nothing feverish or waywardly alarmist. It is a thunderous and direful calm, but it is informed with an unearthed placidity, as though he lived now in another world. He evinces that strangely sunny reserve and confidence which mark those who have come to recognize that the fate of martyrdom awaits them. We savour in his spirit now those countervailing attitudes with which Socrates in prison puzzles us, a conviction of liberty which seems capable at any moment of breaking free from the net, and, at the same time, an almost fatalistic surrender to circumstances which have the appearance of being utterly irrational. He gives the impression of yielding himself to some ineluctable tragedy that lies at the very heart of the world, some slow and almost shapeless movement in things which demands sacrifice and death if relief is to come to the world and himself. He regards the defection of one of his bosom friends, Judas Iscariot, as something which cannot be overridden. His inactivity towards that treason may give us at first the idea that his will is paralysed and incapable of engaging with it; but the final impression in our minds is one of the entanglement of them all, Jesus, Judas and Jewry, in a necessary and dreadful solution to be brought about by eclipse and blood.

Now, in connection with this final note of *sacrifice and martyrdom* which we detect in the spirit of Jesus, let us see a singular thing! It continues to the end to abide in audible harmony with all else that we caught in him. In the case of spirits akin to his, we find, as a rule, that the development of the consciousness of martyrdom evacuates or drowns those earlier

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

traits with which we have already dealt. The awareness of approaching doom drains, of its sunny force and rich humanism, the spirit that marked the spring-time of their career. The warm blood of it now runs thin and cold; the athletic poise of it becomes stilted and attenuated; the large fire of it, as of a bonfire, now shrinks to such a taper as lights the way to the tomb. But such developments are lacking in the case of Jesus. Nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which this derided and persecuted man passes onwards to his doom with nothing missing of those marks and bearings of the prince whom at the first we saw invade the world with so self-possessed an energy, with a common-sense as fearful and kindly as the light of the sun, with the aristocratic demeanour of one who rejoiced in the common nobility of all mankind. The narrative in *Mark* shows us him carrying forward all this undiminished, proportionate in its full virility, even to that criminal's cross which he so dignified that the kings of earth now display it as their proudest cognisance. In those last days he sweeps through the cathedral of his nation with a lash (xi, 15); he turns with "innocent stare" to look at the glorious mass of the temple, and his amazed disciples behold it become a heap of ruinous stones (xiii, 2); he lets Judas go with the high and compassionate tolerance, at its full, with which Arthur the king saw Guinevere pass; he confronts the majesty of Rome with an aristocratic calm before which the procurator feels the wisdom and might of all the world to be foolish and incapable; he meets the prerogative of God in His high priests with an ancestral claim which moves them in frenzy to tear their holy robes asunder; he treats the protestations of adherence on his disciples'

UNITY OF HIS PERSONALITY

part with a kindliness that cannot resist the penetrating jest that their vows and the crowing of a cock are intermingled (xiv, 30); he rises from the ground, whereon he had prostrated himself to adjust his "appalled and agitated" soul (xiv, 33) to his coming doom, to face the guard who would arrest him and to confuse them with his ironical badinage about swords and clubs.

Such hints and instances could readily be multiplied of the perfect continuance, to the very end, of all that we have noted as the constituents of this amazing personality. Thus, as I am confident, we are face to face throughout this most primitive of the Gospels, with a soul that is merely caricatured in all those portraits of him, so prevalent in certain quarters of scholarship to-day, which, to quote Inge's just words, depict him as "a mild specimen of the Mahdi type." Even in *Mark* there lives and moves before us a being magnificent in his very simplicity, compact of thoughts and dreams which cohere in one another with an intensity that sets him forth as a veritable prince among the children of men, polarized in a way that makes him revolve with equal homeliness between the fields of flowers where children play and the circuit of those stars within which the destinies of this round world are woven. The very fulness and coherent richness of the man Jesus who issues to us from this Gospel, defeat us. They are no more manageable by us as *Mark*, with all his ingenuousness, presents them, than they become when they are added to and elaborated in the other Gospels, even in *John*. If it take a philosopher, as we are told it does, to elucidate the presentation of Jesus in *John*, it will take him all his strength to make practicable the Jesus in *Mark*. In my own reading of *Matthew*,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Luke, and even *John*, I have no feeling that I am being carried away captive to a realm that is divided by a desert from the Galilee and Jerusalem of *Mark*. On the contrary, in those I find myself enlarged and satisfied in the primitive understanding and appraisal of Jesus which I gathered in *Mark*. In them, hints, sometimes almost fugitive indications of secrets in the spirit of Jesus, which in *Mark* tossed aside momentarily the curtains of great and brooding mysteries, are now extended and made clear, and the veils opened and held apart.

§ 7. *The partition of the ultimate characteristics of the personality of Jesus among his interpreters ; and the resultant one-sidedness of their theories.*

The very lavishness of this amazing soul has almost been its undoing in the minds that have essayed to explore it. The greater part of the confusion with which the study of Jesus is beset, even in exalted and scholarly regions, is due to that very lavishness and to the difficulty our minds have in maintaining hold, in one sustained image, even of those salient marks in it to which we have been addressing ourselves. The mind of man is limited in this, as in all large enterprises, by a native tendency to explore it by considering aspects of it in turn, and also by the accompanying bias of such absorption in some particular aspect as renders us oblivious of the coherent whole. We find this in operation in the judgments men form of Jesus. They are prone thus to emphasize those salient characteristics of his spirit which we have defined to ourselves, and, by that pursuit, to present limited aspects of it, sometimes indeed no more than a single limited aspect of it, with one-sidedness and exaggeration. The marks we detected

JESUS AMONG HIS INTERPRETERS

are as follows : We perceived or sensed in Jesus a spirit that is mysteriously energetic, humane, informed with a common-sense of radiant simplicity, ironic, and aristocratic, alarmist in a detached and exalted fashion, and with the naked and triumphant submissiveness of the great martyrs. It were not difficult to indicate how on the basis of such characteristics, taken apart or in isolation from one another, interpretations of Jesus have been developed in very one-sided ways. For example, that aspect of Jesus which we considered under the title of his "ancestry," the undoubted and puzzling sense we have of the "aristocratic" in him, has been so enhanced in the traditional Christology that the human and humanist side of his personality has, in some instances, been almost obliterated ; he is made to appear as a divinity who traverses this scene of earth in a pageant almost of make-believe. Again, the "humaneness" of Jesus, informed with those buoyant and poetic notes which we remarked in that connection, has been so dwelt upon that Jesus is defined in such romantic terms as abound in the picture which Renan made familiar to the world. The concluding chapter of his famous *Life of Jesus* is permeated with this romanticism ; Jesus is the "adorable," "the infuser of a new spirit into the world," "not a founder of dogmas, or a maker of creeds." The picture Renan gives us of Jesus is one in which, as he says, "tenderness of heart was in him transformed into infinite sweetness, vague poetry, universal charm." Again, in such as Harnack, the "common-sense" of Jesus is so delivered from its "contemporary integument," and the "timeless" element in his message so removed from its Galilean attendances and accents, that the man Jesus, with his particular historicity, comes to be little

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

more than a thin pipe through which the oracles he uttered might have been sounded forth among men in any age, no matter which. Harnack's theme is to secure "the essential elements" in the Gospel and to show that these are "timeless."¹ All this is to the good; but the Gospel which he thus secures has the look of a ghost unduly disembodied. It may be quite true, further, as he contends, that "no one who possesses a fresh eye for what is alive, and a true feeling for what is really great, can fail to see (the Gospel) and distinguish it from its contemporary integument."² But we tread very diffidently when we are asked to follow Harnack to that height, whither he invites us, from which the Gospel's connection with Judaism and the like "will appear only a loose one, and most of the threads leading from it into 'contemporary' history become of no importance."³ This is an exaggerated "simplification" of the Gospel, and leaves us with an image of Jesus as remote in its own way from historical reality as that pageant of a visiting divinity referred to a little ago. Harnack, I suppose, swings thus away from the local and historical setting of Jesus because of his intolerance of that view of Jesus with which pronouncements such as Schweitzer's are involved. This view, in turn, gives us another instance of the unsettlement of the just perspective wherein Jesus should be regarded, which an undue emphasis of some particular aspect of his personality brings to pass. Here the characteristics which we noted as the "energetic" in Jesus, his pressure and even violence of spirit, his "alarmist" outlook and speech, are pushed forward,

¹ Harnack: *What is Christianity?* p. 152.

² Harnack: *ut sup.*, pp. 14 f.

³ Harnack: *ut sup.*, p. 16.

APOCALYPTIC AND JESUS' ETHICS

and Jesus is announced as a prophet of apocalyptic doom. This presentation of Jesus has raised a large turmoil within our own time; but already the waves have lost much of their fury, and the tide turns.

Without doubt, the background that is called "apocalyptic" is set around the horizon of the Gospel story; and it stands to the credit of the school which is identified with that element, that they have lighted it up for us. At the same time, judicious criticism may certainly be said to have shown the emphasis which they lay upon it to be excessive. We shall come back to this later. Meantime, our concern has to do with the bearing of it upon the ethical position of Jesus.

Critics like Schweitzer consider that this cataclysmic expectation on the part of Jesus bestows upon the ethical teaching of Jesus its own particular virtue and value. It lends a force and immediacy of appeal to his counsels for life such as men feel, or ought to feel, in face of the timeless claims and judgments of eternity. There is much that is significant here. But it is not easy to assort it with the other declaration that the teaching of Jesus is an "interim-ethics." The teaching of Jesus, as a matter of fact, is not based upon the fears and temporary adjustments of an interval of time that is ready to issue in a world-wide and re-creative crisis. It is true that some of his counsels are related to imminent catastrophes and that they produce the impression of temporary expediency. But his normal teaching is based, not on such anticipations, but on the eternal interests and issues. As Percy Gardner maintains, the influence of cataclysmic anticipations is not primary, in the teaching of Jesus, but is "a separate or extraneous

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

element. What is dominant is the practical working-sense of the all-importance of the spiritual substratum of life, the sense of religious values."¹ An approaching crisis in time is not adduced by Jesus as the sanction of morality. Even such sayings as urge "hatred" to father and mother are not fortified by eschatological necessities, but by claims that arise from the passionate vision he had of eternal values in life and endeavoured to convey to men, and from the abiding relation in which he detected all men as native children in the realm of divine fatherhood. I don't think we need delay further upon this; the weight of criticism nowadays is all against the "interim-ethic" view of his teaching, as even those confess who were formerly absorbed in it. It has been pointed out by Feine that Schweitzer's master, Weiss, in a second edition of his book, acknowledged that "part of the ethical teaching of Jesus is unaffected by his eschatological ideas." That "part" has grown in the estimate of scholars, until now it may be regarded as the substantial whole of his moral teaching. A summary justification of this declaration may be found readily in such interpreters as E. F. Scott and Hastings Rashdall.²

This completes by way of illustration what I said of the fashion in which the very variety and lavishness of the spirit of Jesus beguile his interpreters into partial and, accordingly, defective descriptions of him and disproportionate interpretations of his function in history. If we try to hold it all in one image within our minds and hearts, we are baffled indeed; although that is what we should ever try

¹ Gardner: *The Practical Basis of Christian Belief*, p. 160.

² See Scott: *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 42 ff.; Rashdall: *Conscience and Christ*, Lecture 2.

THE EVANGELISTS AS HISTORIANS

to do. Nevertheless, in such an effort we do envisage a recognizable personality. We should know him if we met him, and saw him act and heard him speak. Doubtless his hands would point, with those almost casual gestures of his, into depths at which we should stand giddy and blankly wondering, and his simplest words would fall on our ears with tones that should haunt us as from an undiscovered choir in the unseen about him. But we should know him and recognize him as the man whom *Mark* sketches for us and *John* portrays with colours borrowed from the vessels in which God mixed the substance of the worlds. Such primary historians as these had the most onerous task set them that biographer ever attempted. They attempted to fulfil it in no other way than the method which alone is reasonable and legitimate. Their aim was not the "art of accumulating material, but the sublime art of investigating it," as Acton describes the office of the historian.¹ The process by which they educed the man from the material of his life was a kind of divination. It was by a "means of intuition"; and that is the one hopeful way, for, as Deissmann claims, "every historian who has more to do than merely investigate old texts, to solve chronological problems, and to make certain of outward facts, who rather has to deal with the soul of a great man, must in the end, if he wishes to gain an all-round picture, divine by means of intuition."² In this the Gospels have succeeded wonderfully. A coherent, though elusive personality issues thence upon us. And we who read come at him, as the writers hoped we should, by a process at one with the process of "intuition" or "divination" by which

¹ Acton: *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 15.

² Deissmann: *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, p. 23.

they limned the spirit that formed the man called Jesus.

So large and liberal is all this that we envisage in Jesus, that we may have difficulty in going on to regard him and his function as exhausted in the customary title of Teacher. He did "teach"; but we cannot but feel that his "teaching" is something more than the utterance of maxims and aphorisms about life. He seems to have offered these in plenty; and yet even his earliest hearers had a sense of something more than this in the "authority" (as they tried to define the impression to themselves) of his "teaching," something that lay behind his words in the recesses of the life-force that broods upon the world. If people like ourselves, regarding a lighted electric lamp in the room in which we sit at homely ease, were suddenly caught with a visionary sense of the great magnetic storms in the utmost heavens and around the girdle of this wide earth, which have come to a point in this little luminous globe, we should have some idea, I think, of what his first hearers felt undefinedly when they tried to describe the teaching of Jesus by such terms as "authoritative." It is something like this we ourselves feel even now, as we read the fragmentary account we possess of his talk and gestures. I feel persuaded, from what we have seen of Jesus in our enquiry already, that we have in him a spirit more lavish in equipment and more dominant in influence that can be described by such a term as "teacher," be it in morality or even in religion. We shall be constrained to give further attention to this. But, meanwhile, in pursuit of our present aim, we must pass on to consider Jesus as a Teacher.

PART ONE

CHAPTER II

JESUS CONSIDERED AS A TEACHER

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>Jesus as a teacher</i>	47
2. <i>The inherent qualities of his Teaching :</i>	
(1) <i>Its positive character</i>	48
(2) <i>Its maieutic character</i>	49
(3) <i>Its inspirational quality</i>	49
(4) <i>The nature of its originality</i>	50
(5) <i>Its "poetical" character</i>	54

CHAPTER II

JESUS CONSIDERED AS A TEACHER

§ 1. *Jesus as a Teacher.*

However much fuller was the function Jesus discharged than that of a tutor in the manners and principles of daily life, it was primarily by the words of his mouth he made his early impact upon his fellows ; it was as a teacher he was regarded at the first, however uncertain they were as to his fulfilling familiarly that customary rôle. I continue in doubt as to whether any one, such as Pigou, has the right to say without qualification that " Jesus regarded himself chiefly as a teacher." ¹ Such a statement does not square with the total impression his emergence in Galilee makes upon us. Of course he taught ; but I don't think we can escape the feeling that his tuition has a kind of detachment about it, an air of the casual, even " a certain absentmindedness," such as might attend one who had other purposes to fulfil and other methods of fulfilling them, than are undertaken by a teacher who has instruction to unload upon the minds of his pupils.²

But now, with such reservations made, let us go on to envisage him to ourselves as a Teacher. His characteristics and methods as such have been so often teased and so knotted in many devices, that

¹ A. C. Pigou : *The Problem of Theism*, p. 93.

² See Figgis : *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, pp. 159 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

it were tedious to try to display them here. At the same time it is advisable, as we shall find further on more fully, I think, to dwell at this stage on certain of the inherent notes and manners of Jesus as a teacher.

§ 2. *The inherent qualities of his Teaching.*

§§ (1) *Its positive character.*

Right away, as we give heed to the sentences and allegories about life which fell from him, we are caught by an energetically *positive* quality about his teaching. Jesus is a prophet of the "Everlasting Yea." He escapes throughout from that suspicion which always attaches to those who would herd their fellows through life by the goads of negatives. His whole bearing in dealing with people in mind and body is possessed of this positive characteristic. It is notable, for example, that in those healings of sick folk which attended his virile progress through the countryside, it is the health in the sick he works upon and not their disease; he summons the dispirited man within to reassert himself. This was a new therapeutic in the earth, and only within our own age has it come to be duly saluted and appreciated. I dislike indeed the current fashion in certain quarters which, in dealing with Jesus, is satisfied to call him a "psycho-analyst"; but psycho-therapy is as old as Nazareth, for its expedients were among the methods of Jesus. As Berguet puts it, legitimately enough, "His is the same method, the same confidence in the work of life. He knew that what destroyed life was the obstacles and the negations with which the false doctors of the spirit surround it." ¹

¹ Berguet: *Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, p. 184. cf. Underhill: *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-day*, pp. 113 f.

THE QUALITIES OF HIS TEACHING

§§ (2) *Its maieutic character.*

It is in keeping with this that his method has been characterized as *maieutic* ; that is to say, he set himself to bring to the birth, ideas, volitions and emotions, which he evidently took to be embryonic in the heart of man or even baulked and arrested in their emergence.¹ This must ever be the reasonable course for revealers to take who would instruct their fellows in the truth and practice of life. None of their scholars can graduate with them unless the tuition offered them has from the first its natural alliance with what is already in their breast. In this sense the conception of knowledge as “*reminiscence*” is valid. Truth is not a precious stone brought from afar and set in the claws of the recipient mind. It is there already in the mind, awaiting the explorative point of the digger’s pick and the sifting baptism of his kindred spirit. Thus Jesus, taking the popular image of the “*Kingdom of God*” in his own way, declared it to be already among or within his hearers. He brought to the birth the “*children of the heavenly father*” which the poorest and even the most perverted of his disciples were.

§§ (3) *Its inspirational quality.*

Accordingly, his teaching was poles apart from the merely legalistic in character ; it was *inspirational*. He removed himself from that bureau or confessional to which men and women turn so readily, in the craving for authoritative and directoral instructions as how to pass most simply through the problems of daily life. He promulgated no code, but endeavoured to cause “*principles*” to spring forth from their

¹ cf. B. Jowett : *Sermons on Faith and Doctrine*, p. 251 ; and Sabatier : *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, pp. 286, 287.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

native soil in the minds and consciences of men. It is true that, in the course of his teaching, he uttered counsel in the form of precepts. These have repeatedly been taken as strict and inviolable laws by such as have missed that aim and method of his teaching with which we are at present dealing. Thus Tolstoi went astray and formulated a way of Christian life which had perplexed Jesus. The precepts are not laws or by-laws; they are illustrations of principles, and their acute and startling definition is intended to make them cut into the attention of his hearers, who, if they have anything of Jesus' saving sense of humour, will readily recognize that they are instruments of the school, not axes or swords with which to cleave our way through the woods and oppositions of life.¹

§§ (4) *The nature of its originality.*

Such considerations as these bear upon the vexed problem of his *originality*. I suppose the word really means that, in the man or the message we call original, there is that which appears and acts as freshly inspirational, as a very notable fountainhead arisen among men. It cannot mean that a spring has opened in the earth which bears no relationship to the common waters "underneath the earth." But some speak as though it were possible for a prophet to arise who should not merely bring forth water from the stricken rock, but wine or streams of nectar. That would be "original" to the point, not of the supernatural, but of the unnatural and the freakish. The original thinker or prophet is not he who brings these gifts to mankind, but rather he who acts as such a pipe that the common reservoir of wisdom among men is made available for every mouth.

¹ cf. J. W. Hunkin, in *Modern Churchman*, Sept., 1921, p. 249.

THE ORIGINALITY OF JESUS

The trouble, then, is really a trivial one which has vexed the Christian devotee when he is confronted by those who point to similarities and even identities between the oracles of Jesus and those of other sages. On the other hand, those who vex the inhabitants of Zion by demonstrating that the Temple is built of stones brought from many quarries, are possessed of the same stupid thought that originality lies in dissimilarity. It ought surely to be very plain that the contribution Jesus was prepared to bring to life and its interpretation could not have made contact at all with the minds of men, could not have found any entrance therein whatever, unless along the lines of a kinship in thought and expression already, in some measure, established among them. Raphael and the sorriest dauber use the same pigments, the same canvas, and deal with subjects that are "public property." Shakespeare is not in possession of a language or a world of thought and action that are denied to all others. These are children and members of the one commonwealth of art or letters; but originality is theirs! So we may allow it to be with Jesus. We are off on an infertile tack when we seek, for example, to confound those who claim that the Fatherhood of God was no unrevealed or vague idea before Jesus preached it.¹

It were an unnatural and unfruitful situation, too, if the moral tuition of Jesus were something isolated or even remote from the wisdom of the world in which he grew in stature and in learning. It may well be said that Jesus as a teacher could not have begun to teach in Galilee and could not have continued to hold his didactic place throughout the generations, were it not that he began in the context of the lore of

¹ cf. Lake and Jackson; *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Part I, p. 401.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

life which was common to them and him alike, and that even when he was recognized as something wonderfully unusual, he continued to teach what they, with their traditional equipment, *ought* to have known. The elaboration of parallels between the substance of his teaching and that of others is, therefore, useless and merely bothersome. "If you could find," as Montefiore says, "separate close parallels for 970 out of, say, the 1,000 verses in the Gospel in which Jesus is the speaker, and even if you put them together and made a nice little book of them, you would not have produced a substitute of equal religious value. The unity, the aroma, the spirit, the genius would all have fled."¹

We shall pursue this subject a little further, since it will be found, I think, to unfold others of those general characteristics of his teaching with which we are engaged. It is customary now among us to detect the originality of his teaching where such as Rashdall find it. He considers that Jesus brought about three creative changes in the moral ideas of his time. These are described as follows: "(1) The separation of the genuinely ethical and permanently valuable elements in the teaching of the Jewish law from the ceremonial and transitory elements; (2) the correction of the current legalism by a more inward morality which condemned the uncharitable or unclean thought or intention as well as the completed act; (3) the definite proclamation of the principle that the neighbour to whom the Jew owed duties was not merely his fellowman."² All this is a true description of much that Jesus accomplished in the field of morality. But such originality as it shows is quite

¹ Montefiore: *The Synoptic Gospels*, Vol. I, p. cv.

² Rashdall: *Conscience and Christ*, pp. 94 f.

MORAL PRECEPTS IN ACTION

plainly not so much a matter of substance as of something else. In each of the three spheres described seers and teachers already had their place, throughout the nation's past, who proclaimed and pled for the refinements of religion and morality thus accredited to Jesus. The great prophets are not silent even in proclaiming that the neighbour to whom the Jew owed duties was not merely his fellow countryman, but his fellowman. Accordingly, what we have of originality or novelty in the contribution Jesus offered must lie in the revival and re-enhancement of those messages, or in the striking emphasis he laid on them, or in the clarification of them, or in some *flair* or presentation which set him as a teacher in a class apart. E. F. Scott has it that it was "by his own character and example Jesus gave reality to the moral ideal. . . . Moral precepts have meaning only when we see them in action, as the attributes of a living personality." In such sentences we are coming closer to the heart of the matter. There is a *personality* there, a particular kind of spirit, a flavour of mind which infuses the common moral heritage so refreshingly that it seems to be almost a new creation. We are still closer to it with Montefiore when he says, in the passage already drawn upon, "There is a certain spirit and glow about the teaching of Jesus which you either appreciate or fail to appreciate. . . . That spirit has the characteristic of genius. It is great, stimulating, heroic." This generous Jewish scholar rings the changes on such words as "the unity, the aroma, the spirit, the genius," of the teaching of Jesus. It is here that the emphasis should be sought. Deissmann is persuaded that Jesus, in his teaching of God, the Kingdom and Love, "would very possibly answer that he made no claim to teach

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

anything new"; and he proceeds to say, "The originality of Jesus lies in his whole personality."¹

The originality of Jesus, then, must be sought in his personality. We may add to those diffident detections by trying now to tell ourselves what impression the personality of Jesus makes upon our spirits as he fulfils his function as teacher. It has been said that originality in teaching "is the secret of what in letters we name 'style' . . . In practical life it appears as that rare gift paradoxically known as common sense."² To that "common sense" in Jesus as a man and as a teacher we have already given heed. The other aspect of his originality is to be sought in that which in literature is called style. This means more than the style with which his words are chosen and arrayed, although, as such, his teaching has been granted a remarkable appreciation for its virginity and beauty.

§§ (5) *Its "poetical" character.*

Beyond the style of words and phrases, there is that in the complexion of his mental aptitude and address which reflects itself in our minds with light as from a many-faceted crystal, and with colours as rich and full as the face of nature. This is an impression which defeats all efforts at verbal definition. Possibly the nearest we can come to it is by saying that he is a *poet*. No sooner, however, is the term offered, than, as at a signal, a score of qualifications leap to the mind. For one thing, poetry is at once distinguished in our critical thought from prose, and we seem to be cast ashore on the assertion that Jesus belongs, not to the sober exponents of morality, but to those lyricists

¹ Deissmann: *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, pp. 148 f.

² B. H. Streeter: "The Historic Christ," in *Foundations*, p. 104.

HIS TEACHING AS "POETICAL"

whose interpretations of life are sweet and comely enough, pleasant adornments of the schools, but not very practical as the instruments and weapons we need for the bustle and battle of workaday life. Such a disposal of Jesus the teacher would be erroneous indeed; this singer of life was the most practical of workers and guides to his fellows. If we call Jesus a poet in the style of his mind and its expression, we must think of him as one who sings "about his work," as the phrase goes, or as that minstrel at Senlac who went into battle with his harp aloft.

It is difficult to divest ourselves of the idea that the poetical is the fanciful, an irresponsible attitude to life, not subject to the judgments of sober reason. Certain philosophers warn us against surrendering ourselves to any who profess, either openly or by suggestion, to guide us poetically into the meaning of the world and man. All are familiar with the counsel T. H. Green gave us in this matter.¹ If we must have a quarrel here, let him appear who shall maintain that it is the suspected "poet" who gives us greater and surer intimacy with the real significance of life than does the pedestrian prosator. Quiller Couch (a name in which pens and lances meet!) is ready to enter as such a champion vigorously. "The quarrel," he declares, "between philosophy and poetry is notorious and inveterate: the patronage of poetry by philosophy as stupid as it is solemnly recognizable. For philosophy attempts to comprehend God's purposes into some system or another: a way which, if effectual, at once enables man to teach God his business, or at least to nag him about it, playing Egeria to his Numa. . . . The poet is more modest. He aspires, not to *comprehend*, but to *apprehend*: to

¹ Green: *Prolegomena*, pp. 1 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

pierce, by flashes, to some point or other of the great wheeling circle.”¹

Those who sit coldly to poetry in the field of truth are sometimes disposed to grant that the poet's admissible function is to add the flavour of warm enthusiasm to the slowly and often painfully detected conclusions of the philosopher. But more must be conceded than that. The poet is as rightfully engaged in giving the primary impulse and “synthetic” view from which the philosopher starts off on his foot-slogging pilgrimage, as might a man climb a hill of prospect from which he took in the general plan of his journey, and then descended to the plain to “walk out the miles.” The poets may be held to be the anticipators of the philosophers, not merely the perfecters, but the authors, of their faith.² It may be doubted whether any sage, however ratiocinative and mathematical his discursions on mind and matter may show themselves in after days, ever began otherwise than upon a “mount of Vision.” Does any thinker appear among us with anything like a comprehensive view of reality, who was not ushered on his laborious march by the impulse he received in some synthetic dream on the mount of the Muses? I doubt it. Nor can I imagine he will go far on his march except he retain throughout it the fervour of that first vision, or arrest his spirit in “seasons of calm weather” to refresh and sustain his pedestrian powers, “far inland though he be” on the plain of his researches, by recalling that primary prospect and bathing his spirit in the depth of its distances. The philosopher is understood to trace

¹ Quiller Couch: *Studies in Literature*, First Series (1923) p. 118. cf. also Henry Jones: *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 275; and *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, pp. 200.

² See St. Loe Strachey: *The River of Life*, p. 116.

THE POET'S FUNCTION

his way by the cold light of reason. As a matter of fact, that light in which he thinks he sees so clearly, came to him at first as a blaze of light, to which and by which his mind was stabbed awake. In that abrupt and flooding radiance he saw reality *unsteadily*, if you will, but he "saw it whole"; and his subsequent efforts are directed to bringing *steadiness* throughout it.

Therefore we may agree that the poet is not to be put out of court because of the "rapt," "unreasoned," fashion in which he addresses the problems of the world and life. It is by the attitude so caricatured that even the philosopher gets under way. We must respect Wordsworth when he claims that "Poetry is the image of Man and Nature." The same definition may be given of Philosophy. Their methods differ, indeed; but the primary motive is the same in each, and, as I have already contended, the mood and activity with which they start off are of the one kind. It is hereabouts we must look to find the definition of a poet, not in Green's rather spiteful treatment of the ecstatic and unreasoned moods and emotions to which he appears to confine the poetic deliverances. "A poet," declared Berguet finely, "is a man who feels the universe taking life within himself, who sees in the spectacle of everyday existence the reflexion of higher verities which the human eye hardly dares to contemplate."¹

The poet awakens to a vision of a harmony in which man, nature, and the power in which all things cohere, are bound up in one another. His longing is to utter this divination. It comes to him not in *vacuo*, but, as a rule, from some flash of insight struck out as he contemplates "every day existence" and the common things and experiences of everyday life. His is not

¹ Berguet: *Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, p. 296.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

that abstraction from all "particulars" by which certain philosophers are understood to begin their search for pure Being. In reality such philosophers begin quite otherwise. They are struck awake by *anything*, "a sunset-touch, a fancy from a flower-bell, someone's death, a chorus-ending from Euripides,"¹ and from the "fantastic ring" of the dance set afoot by "the fifty hopes and fears as old and new at once as nature's self," which that awakening begets, they mount upwards to divine the meaning and measure of the world and life.

It is within such considerations as these that they must move who deal with Jesus as a poet. A book was published recently entitled *The Poetry of our Lord*² which throws a bright light on the poetical form which marks the sayings of Jesus. All this is to the good. But the detection of such forms takes us no further than the fringe of what we must understand by the "Poetry of Our Lord." We do well to look for it in such considerations and contexts as those with which we are presently engaged. There is that spirit of the poet in Jesus which "feels the Universe taking life within himself, and sees in the spectacle of everyday existence the reflection of higher verities which the human eye hardly dares to contemplate." He is endowed with that synthetic vision of reality which grips with kindly passion the shining heart of things, coming to it, not from some isolated peak of reflection made destitute of the flowers and sheep-folds, and the simple hearths of common life, but from those happily ominous contacts with "everyday experience" from which a light leaps up as high as the sun and as deep as the grave. Edward Caird has

¹ Browning: *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

² C. F. Burney: *The Poetry of our Lord* (Clarendon, 1926).

JESUS AS "POET"

described this divination in the soul of Jesus as "some supreme depth and delicacy of spiritual insight," and he proceeds to accede to Jesus "a new organic conception of human life in its relations to nature and to God, which taken in its entirety has no previous counterpart and which indeed constitutes the greatest step which has been gained in the spiritual development of man."¹

I like what Bernard Bosanquet said of him: "The Founder of Christianity looked out upon the external world with free and friendly eyes."² In such freedom and friendliness lies the *metier* of the poet. His spirit nestled in unto a flower as to a fellow-creature in the one family of existence, or within the wings of birds, or as participator in the games of children; but this community he conducted with a freedom of imaginative insight by which he saw all earth and heaven as one garden, and all being as borne upon wings whose feathers streamed beyond the sun. There is a noble discernment in that judgment of Bosanquet's. And he is equally felicitous when, in reference to the attitude of Jesus to the "flowers of the field," he goes on to say, "I doubt whether such disinterested apprehension of floral beauty—so free from moralizing or allegory—as that of the text 'Consider the lilies of the field' can be found outside, or prior to, the Christian illumination." The point there is, that in Jesus we do not savour that disposition so prevalent among those who aspire to teach us the secret of being, which, if it is interested at all in the homely affairs of life, uses them and the array of nature merely as remote illustrations, casually adduced and as indifferently dismissed. To Jesus all

¹ E. Caird: *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, Vol. II, p. 90.

² B. Bosanquet: *History of Aesthetic*, p. 129.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

these things are integral constituents of the one rich scheme of reality, each discharging its creaturely part, each endowed with its own right to exist and to merit its own fulfilment in the copious wealth of the one universe. His interest in a flower is not that of a moralist who plucks it as a colourable symbol of something in the life of the all-important creature called man, and then tosses it aside as having served its only serviceable end. We have the impression that the fingers of Jesus ran through the very grass of the field as through the hair of a child of God that has as real a prerogative to be and to fulfil itself as the angels in heaven. A large measure of this that we discern in Jesus is found in that chief of his kin among the sons of men, St. Francis of Assisi.¹ We are so remote from the vision which Jesus and Francis had of the place that beasts and flowers occupy in the lavish scheme of life, the inherent dignity of their place, however insignificant they seem to us, that we imagine we pay such creatures a compliment when we admit them as illustrations of our own tremendous woes and mighty joys. There is nothing of this in Francis or in his originator. Therefore, as Bosanquet indicates, there is no "moralizing" on nature by either of them.

I fear that this divergence on Jesus as a "poet" may have proved tedious, or may even be regarded as an idle departure from the line of our enquiry. To that I would protest that it may yet be found to be the central avenue to such a destination as we may hope to reach in our whole enquiry. But we have set ourselves a course, and, if we have wandered from it, let us get back with all convenient haste! Nevertheless I would continue to question all criticism of

¹ cf. G. K. Chesterton : *Twelve Types*, p. 77.

PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

our seeming divagation that disputes it on the ground that we now appear to be satisfied to see in Jesus a "poet," and that we seem still resolved to look for such an expositor of ethical wisdom in him as we customarily find in the measured and systematic sages of the ethical schools. My objection to such criticism is based where that objection is based which we took to the segregation of poetry and philosophy. The ethicist, in so far as he seeks to construct a "system" and formulate an organic complex of ideals for life, is a "poet" in the incipience of his task. That is to say, he, too, is set going by some synthetic apprehension of the field in which thereafter he plods his pedestrian way, some vision of the solution which he pretends to conceal as he paces out his scientific course. Therefore, we will not let anyone dismiss the "poet" from the ethical academies any more than we tolerated his rejection by the philosophers. Here, too, many labour under the delusion that ethics are worthy in proportion as they are stripped of all "imaginative" elements and so denuded of the concrete content of life itself that the ideals of mankind become as abstract as laws of physics or mathematical symbols. Neither by mere logic, operating in the concepts which go by the name of ethical, nor by psychological analysis of the contents of the moral consciousness, can we give that "life" to men which ethics must go on to reveal and inspire, if ethical enquiry is to be worth while at all. All such enquiries, and those of Science itself, have a "salvation motive"; they are there to reveal, increase and enhance "life." Ideals in the moral life may be drawn or described so rationally and self-consistently as almost to stand as types of the law of non-contradiction; but the chances are small that

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

they shall move beyond the frozen groves, remote from the haunts and homes of mankind, in which they were congealed. Let us give our minds to the following judgment of Robert Adamson, in that most pregnant of essays in ethics, *The Basis of Morality* : " On the practical side, perhaps more directly than elsewhere, we become aware of the weakness and uselessness of ideals that are not filled from the concrete wealth of actual life. . . . We can give them definiteness, and so understand their worth, only by following out the functions they severally represent in the whole complete texture of actual life. . . . It is not by psychological analysis that we can weigh and measure their significance. Two ways only are possible : the one that of ideal concretion, as I may call it, the method of the imaginative creative writer, who brings into relief a moral problem or a moral duty by displaying it working in a fictitious setting ; the other, less attractive it may be, the method of historical and sociological research." ¹ Herein, as is very clear, we have a point of view from which we see great justification and encouragement in the claim to regard Jesus the " poet " as surely established in the enfranchisement of those who deal, however academically, with the moral truths and ethical counsels of man. His is that " imaginative creative " spirit indeed, which by parable and other dramatizations brings into relief and makes live for men their moral problems and moral duties. Thus, with a free mind, we pass on to compare him with others in the formulation of the ideals and standards of the moral life.

PART TWO

CHAPTER I

THE MORAL STANDARD AS LAW

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>Jesus was confronted with Morality as Law</i>	65
2. <i>The Moral Law as the Law of the Tribe ; and the appreciation of it by Jesus</i>	66
3. <i>The Moral Law as the Law of God</i>	67
(1) <i>The Law of God as embodied in the Scriptures : the attitude of Jesus</i>	68
(2) <i>" Till all be fulfilled "</i>	69
(3) <i>Jesus and the " ideal " of the Law, and how he detected it</i>	73
4. <i>The Moral Law as the Law of Nature</i>	76
(1) <i>The Stoics</i>	78
(2) <i>Stoicism and the mind of Jesus</i>	80
5. <i>The Moral Law as a Moral Sense ; and the attitude of Jesus</i>	85
6. <i>The Moral Law as Conscience</i>	
(1) <i>Butler</i>	87
(2) <i>Jesus and Conscience</i>	88
(3) <i>Jesus and the immediacy of moral judgments</i> .	90

CHAPTER I

THE MORAL STANDARD AS LAW

THE problem of the Moral Standard is the central theme of Ethics. "Ethics is the Science of the Moral Ideal or Standard, by reference to which our judgments of moral value—that is, of the goodness or badness of moral facts—are rationalized or systematized."¹ Or, the problem has to do with man "as he ought to be," with a standard of character by which the individual agent and the issue of his constitution may be judged.

The resultant portraitures which the Schools present of the agent as thus described and established are three in number. The one envisages him as the fulfiller of the law; the second, as an attainer of happiness; and the third as achieving perfection or fulfilment. Thus the Moral Standard is severally erected as Law or Happiness or Perfection.

We shall first of all consider the standard as Law, and find, if we can, where Jesus stands among those who have so proclaimed it.

§ 1. *Jesus was confronted with Morality as Law.*

Jesus certainly engaged with morality under the aspect of Law. The narrative is full of ethical combats conducted by him with his friendly and unfriendly enquirers, and these with few exceptions are involved

¹ James Seth: *Essays in Ethics and Religion*, p. 134.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

in questions of law. This was inevitable, since Law was the form in which life presented itself to his countrymen ; character and conduct were interpreted throughout in relation to commandments. Their primary law-book was their national Scriptures, and that was regarded as the very voice of the divine Law-giver. Besides that, daily life was enmeshed by interpretations of the Book, codes elaborated about it, and traditional customs inspired by the historical events which it enshrined, in such a way and so abundantly that every pace in life was rigidly regulated. So constantly did Jesus encounter this burden and bristle of interpretation that it were surprising should his explication of his own positions be uninformed with legal features. It is a striking fact that in his use of the Old Testament, while twenty-two references to the Psalms are detected, and twenty to Isaiah, there are as many as twenty to the Book of Deuteronomy.

§ 2. *The Moral Law as the Law of the Tribe ; and the appreciation of it by Jesus.*

But the primitive aspect of Law as Moral Standard is to be observed in what is called the " law of the tribe." Here man's moral life consists in obedience to the customs and multifarious observances of that clan system, contrasted with which, we are asked to believe, he barely recognizes himself as a self-dependent individual at all. It is a level which is understood to merit pity. But it is questionable whether Jesus showed that condescension towards it which is thus regarded as its due. He himself was a good nationalist in his punctilious devotion to the feasts and observances of the calendar. He was a faithful churchman. The image some make of him

THE MORAL LAW

as a spiritual aristocrat so possessed of a higher code that he barely tolerated the customary piety of the lesser breed among whom his lot was cast, is very wide of the truth. He never deals in condescension with those whose quiet ambition was simply to fulfil the tribal manners from day to day and to remain a "guileless Israelite." With Jesus, obedience to the "law of the tribe," is not dismissed as a more or less worthless stage in the moral progression of mankind, but is awarded by him a real moral significance. I feel that, with him, customs which touch with reverence those who fulfil them, even though they hardly ever reflect on them, are regarded as contributing to the establishment and growth of their moral life, and that he detected in them an economy for life rooted in old and wholesome wisdoms. For truly, as has been sung among us :

" . . . the world is wise : each curve and round
Of custom's road is no result of chance ;
It curves but to avoid some treacherous ground,
Some quagmire in the wilds of circumstance."¹

§ 3. *The Moral Law as the Law of God.*

Of course, the Moral Law in the nation of Jesus was far advanced beyond what ethicists call the "law of the tribe." It had for centuries become the Law of God, the term by which our tutors describe the further expression of the Moral Standard as Law. At this stage obedience is elevated above custom and tribal traditions and is attached to commandments which are held to issue for a heavenly law-giver. This was the relation of the commonwealth of Israel in the days of Jesus to that legislation for life which

¹ Alex. Smith : *Poems* (Nimmo, 1909), p. 347.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the Scriptures embodied and which the divinely inspired "traditions of the elders" amplified. Therefore, let us now ask how Jesus comported himself to the moral law as divine.

§§ (I) *The Law of God as embodied in the Scriptures : the attitude of Jesus.*

It is well to recognize, at the outset, that he regarded the Law avowed in the national Scriptures, as of God. He never fails to show great reverence for it, as due to that which derives from other than human inspirations. He was jealous for its unembellished dignity and worth, and, accordingly, more than suspicious of all who, by their various embellishments, sullied or confused its pristine integrity, and those who were so engrossed in their own holy traditions as to drop the Law itself. "You drop what God commands," he told them, "and hold to human traditions. Yes, forsooth, you set aside what God commands, so as to maintain your own tradition." (Mark vii, 8 f.). Again he said, "Why do you transgress the command of God with your traditions?" (Matt. xv, 3). He himself so observed the Law that his enemies were at a loss to catch him out in any transgression of it: only in regard to casuistical breakings of the Sabbath were they able so to tackle him. He is indignant with the official guardians of the Law by reason of their punctilious care of ecclesiastical imposts as contrasted with their "impious" neglect of the big things at the heart of God's law. "You impious scribes and Pharisees, you tithe dill and cummin, and omit the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness; these latter you ought to have practised—without omitting the former" (Matt. xxiii, 23). At the same time he displays and

JESUS AND FULFILMENT OF LAW

commends a respect and dutiful heed towards the officials of the national code as is due the tenants of the ancient patriarchial chairs. "The scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses; so do whatever they tell you, obey them, but do not as they do" (Matt. xxiii, 2). Again: "Away and show yourself to the priest and offer the gift prescribed by Moses to notify men" (Matt. viii, 4). Again: "Do not imagine I am going to accuse you to the Father; Moses is your accuser, Moses who is your hope" (John v, 45).

§§ (2) "*Till all be fulfilled.*"

The classical illustration of his favourable attitude to the Law of Israel is, of course, the famous saying, "I tell you truly, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a comma will pass from the Law until it is all in force. Therefore, whoever relaxes a single one of these commands, were it even one of the least, and teaches men so, he will be ranked least in the Realm of heaven: but whoever obeys them and teaches them, he will be ranked great in the Realm of heaven" (Matt. v, 18 f.). The above is Moffatt's translation of these momentous verses, and it is a very suggestive rendering of them. It entertains an abrogation of the Law in that condition of society, probably the society of the Jewish nation, when the Law "is all in force." To plain common-sense that would seem to postpone the abrogation indefinitely. On the other hand, if this saying dates from the beginning of his career, Jesus may have expected so wide-spread a rally to his own revelation of life among his countrymen, that a complete revival of reverence for the Law and the practice of it would prevail. This would be the primary effect of his

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

success. When that was achieved, the Law might "pass," since the spiritual impulse which generated the revival would now be an abiding inspiration in their souls, the Law on Tables being now no longer necessary, as the Law would now be written in their hearts. In any case, we must not whittle away his conviction, so clearly proclaimed, that the Law would endure until such time as it was "all in force."

The rendering given in the A.V., "till all be fulfilled," has afforded endless scope for debate as to the permanence of the Law in the esteem of Jesus. Another sphere of ideas has gathered around the rendering which the R. V. offers: "till all things be accomplished." Into the latter, with such suggestions about the boundary in time of the Law's observance as that it would be reached at the Crucifixion or at Pentecost, I do not propose to enter. As to the former, it should be noted that the verses we are dealing with (verses 18 f.) are separated by such scholars as Moffatt and Soltau from the sequence of the *Logia*, which, in their judgment, stops with verse 17 and resumes at verse 20.¹ Accordingly the "fulfilment" spoken of in verse 18 is not to be connected out of hand with the expression of personal fulfilling which appears in verse 17: "Do not imagine I have come to destroy the Law of the prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfil." I leave this matter by accepting Moffatt's translation of verse 18, and by saying again that Jesus proclaimed the validity of the Law until such time as it was "all in force," whatever may be the term in time of that consummation.

We must concern ourselves, rather, with the saying

¹ See Moffatt: *Introd. to Lit. of N.T.* (3rd Ed.) pp. 254, 255.

HIS PENETRATION OF LAW

in verse 17, "I have not come to destroy (the Law) but to fulfil." This must mean more than simply "keeping the Law"; there were thousands of others so busied. It may be taken to mean "completing the law." Completion is something other than mere addition; even of a house, which is built by a process of addition, completion means the culmination of a plan and motive inherent in it from the first. It is in such a sense that Jesus must be regarded as fulfilling the Law. This is significantly clear in his treatment of the particular commandments which the remainder of Matt. v. narrates. These he did not destroy: rather did he penetrate to the depth of their spiritual import and bring this to light. He interpreted the Law and the prophets, "according to an ideal which he recognized as the leading principle of the Old Testament revelation. . . . It was not by quantitative extension, but by qualitative renewal, that he designed to bring the Law and the prophets to fulfilment. In consciousness and in aim he retained the idea of the old, and did not produce what was absolutely new; but he sought to bring the imperfect expression of that idea to perfection."¹

But there was more than this in what he did. And that "more" may be readily detected, by way of example, in his treatment of the law against adultery (Matt. v. 27 f.). His penetration therein to the full spiritual import of that commandment changes fundamentally the character of the obedience due the law. It alters the law from one imposed on the doer from above to one which, while recognized as divine, can have neither authority nor moral worth until it is saluted as the man's own legislation, and obeyed as such from his "heart." In this Jesus

¹ Wendt: *The Teaching of Jesus*, Vol. II, pp. 18, 26.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

“fulfilled” the Law; but his pursuit of it in the concrete situations of his intercourse with those to whom the Law was writ unalterably on stony tables out of the skies, was bound to lead to difficulties, as it did. It puzzled those to whom all the commands were, by reason of their uniform objective divinity, of equal moment and governance; and it led Jesus to make such distinctions between them as gave the appearance of abrogation on his part. It was a contest between a spiritual genius who revered the Law given of God as dearly as any of his fellows, but who desired to kindle the *ideal* at the living heart of it as a warming and directing fire within their hearts,—between such a genius and those to whom the Law of God was as stones whereby men might be penned in outward virtue, or so weighted at every pace in life that they should not adventure into wickedness. Of all this and the fretfulness of the struggle it involved, Jesus was fully aware. His was a hard task, consciously undertaken and carried out. It had been easier for him to continue the rôle of John the Baptist by a campaign for greater fidelity in keeping the Law that came down from the skies, easier, too, though not in the sense of security, to break the Tables afresh and finally, and to proclaim wholly new departures in the conduct of life, as might a Galilean Nietzsche. But these are not the only alternatives for the would-be reformer. A third, and that the best, remains. It is the course Jesus took: an unrestrained respect for the ancient Law, a revival within his own heart and that of his associates of the spiritual imagination which inspired it in its origin, and the lodgment of it within the breast in creative resourcefulness.¹

¹ cf. Henry Jones: *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, pp. 107 f.

THE IDEAL OF DIVINE LAW

§§ (3) *Jesus and the "ideal" of the divine Law, and how he detected it.*

Now, what in the thought of Jesus was that inherent essence of the Law? What was the "ideal," as Wendt phrases it, which Jesus "recognized as the leading principle of the Old Testament revelation?" The answer may be found in that reduction of the Law he exhibited in the famous saying: "You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and chief command. There is a second like it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. The whole Law and the prophets hang upon these two commands" (Matt. xxii, 37 ff.). Here is deposited as in a crucible the essence of the divine Law. But that chemical figure may mislead us. It does so mislead us if Jesus is regarded as now disposed to treat as of small, or even no moment, the general array and differentiation of Law which he has thus "reduced" to its essence, as might a garden of roses be reduced to their "atar." He did not cease to reverence the Law in its multifarious form, now that he had formulated its "leading principle" in these two compact commandments. He was not absorbed in these as in a *residuum* of Law, but as in a *compendium* of Law. He himself continued to "keep the Law," even to the end of his career, as is plain, for example, from the devout punctilio with which he set about observing that Passover to which he added the rite that became the Eucharist in after days.

Another question remains: How did he detect that "ideal" within the Law? By what process of thought or spiritual intuition did he thus penetrate to its ultimate "principle?" To such a question

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the answer, I fear, cannot be other than a groping in spiritual recesses which yield their secret very hardly, if indeed at all. All the more so, since we cannot but feel that Jesus, in his handling of the Law, moves with a superlative confidence almost as of one who had a consultative intimacy with its initial composition and its ultimate purposes. The impression his words and bearing in this matter make upon myself is not that of one who arrives with condescension to over-rule an antique code with new or summary commandments, but of one who was, in spirit, in the secret of its original composition and has now entered upon his commission to read and reveal its significance "between the lines." He handles it as an assistant in its nativity. Consider what he said in the dispute concerning the law and significance of marriage and divorce, to those who contended that Moses permitted "divorce by the tendering of a separation notice": "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, on account of the hardness of your hearts, but it was not so from the beginning" (Matt. xix, 8). There speaks an interpreter of Moses who, ideally, stood behind the law-giver as a confidant. Further, there is the wealth of suggestion in the amazing pronouncement, "it was not so from the beginning."

I said above that this is a quality of spirit active in Jesus which, as his own endowment, cannot be communicated as is the tuition of mathematics to boys in the school. At the same time it is plain that Jesus regarded it as communicable. The whole tenour of his instruction in the Sermon on the Mount proceeds on a manifest conviction of his spirit that once he had indicated to his hearers, or, at least, some of them, the inner implications of the Law, they would

AN "EAR" FOR THE LAW

recognize the validity of his revelation. He looked to find such a response on his pupil's part as we speak of when we say that a man "has an ear." "He who has an ear, let him listen to this!" (Matt. xiii, 43). He "piped" to men, as he put it once (Luke vii, 32), and they that had the ear, caught the tune again as a forgotten or lingering melody. They that had "an ear" or "eyes to see," came at his revelation with that kindred salutation of what has been revealed, which Adeimantos showed in his response to Socrates in Plato's *Republic*. Said Socrates, "God then is single and true in deeds and words and neither changes himself nor deceives others." Said Adeimantos in reply, "So too is it evident to me, *now that you say it.*" Of this Otto has well written, "The most interesting point here is . . . on the side of Socrates, the apparently 'dogmatic' tone of his pronouncement for he does not spend the least pains in demonstrating it and, on the side of Adeimantos, the ingenuous surprise and, at the same time, the confident assurance with which he admits a truth novel to him."¹ I venture to think of this as not inapposite in its bearing upon what I am saying of the communication by Jesus of the truth he possessed concerning God and of the "ideal" burden of the Law.

There were many of his hearers who had no "ear." His was a flexible music which, in its range and seeming inconsequence, became an offence to those who hearkened to the Law as to a uniform rhythm and beat of drums, each stroke of which was received as equal in weight and in its right of summons. He was quickly in combat with these conservatives. The ultimate oracles had so hardened in interpretation,

¹ Rudolf Otto: *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 141.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

and had so frozen in the chilly literalism of the schools, that they lay like a glacier of ice and rock upon the land. Under the sunshine of the spirit of Jesus, they began to flow again as refreshing streams ; but the savants of his nation, looking forth from the narrow windows of their conventual rigidity, saw only the deluge come again. There ensued in Israel that contest which is familiar to all observers of the history of morals in divers nations, in which a divine Law, now become hard and arid and devoid of that humanism and experimental realism in which it was " revealed " in the time of its origins, invited criticism either by way of pious re-interpretation or of indignant rebellion.

In the history of morals, reaction against Law as the Law of God develops from a movement of the human spirit in which two elements may readily be distinguished. The one may be conveniently entitled the impulse of humanism, and the other the impulse of conscience. I propose that we give some attention to each of these in turn.

§ 4. *The Moral Law as the Law of Nature.*

The writs of the Law of God run smoothly enough so long as they accord with that ancient humanism, in the needs and aspirations of which the Law came to be. But in course of time, as the significance of that origin becomes oblivious, and as the Law draws apart from life and assumes the shape of rules and sanctions which are the expression of a Will extraneous to those creative needs and aspirations, occasions occur when the Law startles its servants with its " un-naturalness," and the fight begins. The instance invariably cited in illustration of this process is, of course, the case of Antigone. But the problem is

NATURE AND THE MORAL LAW

universal. The complainer against the law is at a loss to know whither to direct his appeal. Vaguely but with a triumphant confidence he knows that there is such a court of appeal somewhere. It may be above or behind the Law, or it may be in the depths of his own tortured spirit. In the latter case, the appeal, when detected and formulated, becomes an appeal to that inner directive voice which I have called "conscience." But it is, at first, rather to the other than to this that the appellant reaches out, as to another *objective* jurisdiction, more serenely human than the bench that has condemned him, a divinity to whom the hearts and hardships of man are dearer than they appear to be to the awful power whose hard and insensible fiat has fallen upon him. He feels that the judgment of the Law cuts across a "natural" law which is closer to the hearths of man and his kindred among the domesticities of woods and fountains, than is this cruel oracle issuing from monumental temples and the iron-bound books of priests.

It may have been to this that Jesus made his silent but invincible appeal when he turned the accusers of the adulteress out of doors, with the gloom of Sinai on their faces and the law of stone built into their hearts of stone (John viii, 3). Certainly this appears to have been the direction of his appeal when he ruined the inflexible interpretation in which his opponents had hardened the divine decree of the Sabbath, with all the rich humanism of its inherent purposes (Matt. xii, 1 ff; Luke xiv, 1 ff; Mark ii, 27 f.). "The Sabbath was made for man," he declared. The Sabbath is other than a rule of which the only poor reasonableness lies in a decree issued by a God who consults merely his own good pleasure

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

or whim in proclaiming it. It draws its significance, not thus from the skies, but from the earth. It emerges from the ground of human need and well-being ; it is based on man's nature ; it is a *natural* law ; it is to be interpreted in the court of humanism.

This criticism of the Law of God as the Moral Standard may be carried very far. It may go so far as to erect Nature itself, or "the Law of Nature," as the standard. But this, in turn, assumes various degrees. God may be banished altogether from the moral purview, and Nature alone made the court of appeal. But here, again, Nature may be regarded as spiritual in constitution, at least in its more important aspect, or it may be limited to that constitution which Materialism portrays. Materialism of the unadulterated sort makes morals a matter of physical health.

§§ (1) *The Stoics.*

The abiding struggle of the human mind has lain in an effort to reconcile these worlds. In ancient times the most gallant attempt was that made by the Stoical philosophy. Stoicism proclaimed that there is but one world, and that a perfect one ; therein all that happens is for the best, and, as Marcus Aurelius declared, "best, too, at the time when Nature brings it." That world is the information of Reason, and, as Reason is the essential element in man, he is set the task of conforming himself to Nature, *vivere convenienter naturæ*. The Stoics attained, indeed, "a vivid realization of the world as a Whole."¹ They made a casual concession to popular belief by speaking of "the gods," but their inherent teaching was of an Absolute even as I have just indicated. Indeed, further, there hovers behind "God" a rule of Fate

¹ Davidson : *The Stoic Creed*, p. 224.

THE STOICS

which consorts badly with the theism of Epictetus ; but such an absolutism is not obtruded. Like all philosophers who make shift to keep in touch with human life in the concrete, they were not perturbed by such " noble inconsistencies " as deliver the perfection of philosophical systems from sterility and paralysis ! ¹

The wisdom of Epictetus for life is offered on two levels. On the one level his concern is with what would now be termed laws of nature and the natural relationships of life. As regards the latter, the necessary practical guidance will be available if we seek to explicate the commerce we have with others in our capacity as a son, a father, a brother, a youth, an old man, a senator, and so forth. But Epictetus, in another and probably loftier aspect of his moral philosophy, proceeds to describe obedience to the Reason that informs nature, as communion with God. " We and He are part of one birth and growth . . . By virtue of this communion with Him we are in the first rank of created things ; we and He together form the greatest and chiefest and most comprehensive of all organizations. . . . If we once realize this kinship, no mean or unworthy thought of ourselves can enter our souls. . . . The sense of it forms a rule and standard of our lives." ²

Hatch considers that this attainment of Epictetus sets the Stoical Ethics on a higher level than those of Christianity. Christianity, he affirms, " took over the fundamental idea of the Jewish theocracy. Its ultimate appeal was not to the reasonableness of the moral law in itself, but to the fact that God had enacted it. Greek morality, on the contrary, was

¹ cf. Davidson : *ut sup*, pp. 215 f., 222.

² Quoted by Hatch : *Influence of Greek Ideas*, etc., pp. 154, 155.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

‘independent.’ The idea that the moral laws are laws of God is, no doubt, found in the Stoics ; but they are so in another than either the Jewish or the Christian sense : they are laws of God, not as being expressions of His personal will, but as being laws of nature, part of the whole constitution of the world.”¹ This comparison may be just, if by Christian Ethics Hatch means the morality, or one aspect of the morality, that developed in the Church. It is palpably unjust if it is intended to refer to the ethics of Jesus. We have already seen in what sense his morality may be taken under Law ; certainly its ultimate appeal is not “to the fact that God had enacted it,” but to something at least akin “the reasonableness of the moral law in itself.”

§§ 2. *Stoicism and the mind of Jesus.*

Truly the Stoical conception was splendidly declared and so entertained that, ever since, human thought has remained debtor to it in the continuing struggle to overcome the dualism of matter and spirit. But the unity which we detect as inherent in the conception Jesus had of reality is not behind that which the Stoics conceived ; nay, it may be found to prevail with a profounder intimacy. This steals upon us as we company with Him in his exhibition of spiritual realities in terms of material values. In his revelation of the laws and causalities that operate in the world, he passes from what we call the spiritual sphere to the material and *vice versa*, with an ease and readiness which indicate no such cleavage between them as perplex whole schools of thought. It is not that he moves out of the one sphere into the other to find an “illustration,” and, having found it, leaves its source

¹ Hatch : *op. cit.*, p. 158.

JESUS AND STOICISM

behind, and returns with the reflected light that an "analogy" affords. The light he finds in the material sphere is a spiritual light, another beam of the one radiance which illuminates *all* that makes the world. The law that operates in the material sphere is the same kind of law that operates in the spiritual; the two spheres are in the end one.¹

Such common order as he detected by means of "a marvellous insight," as Gardner phrases it, within the world, behind its physical and spiritual aspects, he was satisfied to exhibit, and to leave that exhibition of it, in imaginative phrases and parables, to breed or to awaken a kindred insight in the minds of his fellows. He traced it back to something other and more commendable than the Stoics' fire, "a corporeal substance, but one exhibiting consciousness, purpose, will." If we try to catch him balancing the world's unity between Matter and Mind, we may say that it leans to the latter, not, however, in the way of regarding Mind as anterior to Matter, or as continuing to subsist, whatever becomes of Matter, but in the way in which Matter must be regarded as dependent upon Mind in a different degree than the dependence of Mind on Matter.² The Stoic Epictetus, in the higher plane of his wisdom, passes to a survey of that unity as spiritual; it is God, who lies at the heart of things, and a God not remotely placed from the Heavenly Father into whose providence Jesus resolved all reality, although there is a richness of significance about the Galilean pronouncement of Love as the central personality which is lacking in that of the Stoic. But we are concerned meantime with the matter of the unity which these

¹ See Gardner: *The Practical Basis of Christian Belief*, p. 112.

² cf. Jones: *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 267.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

two wisdoms avow within the two basic aspects of reality ; and here that of Jesus must be regarded as the more intimate, vital and intense.

In the Stoic view, as justly described by Hatch, the moral laws are "part of the whole constitution of the world." It is even so in the view of Jesus. The one world is made in the one way, and those laws we usually describe as physical laws run upward in continuity with those termed spiritual. The Stoics found the relationships, inherent in such moral connections as that of father and son, ruler and commonwealth, master and servant, to lie within the same spectrum as the relationships between waves and wind, seed and plant, cloud and rain. This is a conviction much shaken in our own day by all that assembles about theories of relativity in knowledge and morality. But it is still confidently maintained, and its security traces back to the Stoics. It was from them the assurance spread among men that, as Henry Jones contended, "knowledge and morality are not radical modifications of the order of the existing world. . . . Knowledge and morality do not seek to bring a new order of existence into being. . . . Knowledge, in so far as it is valid, *discovers* the order already existent in the world ; and a moral agent, in so far as his actions are good, *reveals* the ideality of the world, recognizing and obeying its laws and making themselves their willing instrument. . . . Morality does not *make* a man his brother's keeper ; it reveals the brotherhood which had been ignored." ¹

As surely as the Stoics, Jesus regarded those laws of the moral life as inherent in the constitution of the world. He revealed constitutive relationships

¹ Jones : *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, pp. 267 f., 127.

THE DEEPER INSIGHT OF JESUS

between man and man and between man and "God," and sought, as did Epictetus, to open the eyes of his followers to appreciate a further "order already existent in the world," which had so far escaped them or had been ignored. In his persuasion, for example, "it is natural to man to love his kind, and he commands us only to give nature play."¹ Here he is in line with the Stoics who found brotherhood to be natural law. But, by what we must be content meantime to call a deeper "insight" into the "constitution of the world," Jesus detected extensions and depths of this fraternal affinity which were "ignored," as in blindness, by the Stoics. He found the implications of the law of brotherhood and love bring to one native hearth social grades and degrees of outcast folk in a fashion undreamt of even by Epictetus. Here too lies the significance of those apparent "commands" which he enunciates in the Sermon on the Mount as to our personal relations with our fellows. These are not proclaimed as newly devised rules whereby man may advance into regions of morality hitherto closed to us and all uninvaded. They are revelations of an order of life which is a *natural* order for man; so soon as man opens his eyes to them in imaginative commonsense, he finds himself called to modes of behaviour which become him natively as man.

It cannot be complained that Law, as thus entertained by Jesus or the Stoics, is merely super-imposed on man as the decree of an external Will. With Jesus, it is our own Law—our own, that is, as the expression of a will of Nature or God which is kindred to our own—that we bind upon ourselves. In his own life, it was "his meat," his natural nourishment and

¹ Seeley: *Ecce Homo* (Nelson Classics), p. 194.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

fulfilment, "to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John iv, 34).

We have likewise seen that the Stoics had views of the law of reality as other than an order of life imposed from without. To them Nature was "the will of God, as revealed in the heart and conscience of those who seek to know it, and interpreted through the observation, in a reverent and faithful spirit, of the facts of life."¹ Law certainly bears the aspect of necessity; but its necessity is transcended in so far as the agent recognizes it as rooted in himself, and so salutes it that, in obedience, he is acting with freedom. "His obedience to this necessity which is absolute is *free* obedience; for he is obeying what he himself calls good, what he himself approves. Hence he re-enacts its behests, he re-issues its laws from his own conscience, and in submitting his life to their guidance he is bowing to the dictates of his own spirit."²

The Stoics considered that this recognition of Law as native to man's own spirit is achieved by means of *προλήψεις*, by which term they intended something in the nature of "primitive, natural conceptions" within our spirit, whereby, as by a certain natural aptness, we discern "the existence and character of God, and the general decrees of the moral law."³ This calls up before our minds inevitably those types of moral theory which, in various ways, detect in man an endowment of moral sense, intuitive reason, and the like, whereby he is able to discern between right and wrong in conduct, and to interpret the Law that prevails in our environment both near and far. We

¹ Rolleston: *Teaching of Epictetus*, p. xix.

² Henry Jones: *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 279.

³ Rolleston: *ut sup.*, pp. xxx f.

MORAL SENSE

shall pass on, I suggest, to look at these, in pursuance of our plan, and, in particular, to regard the contribution which Kant made in this field, and to see where, if anywhere, Jesus stands therein. You will recollect how we noted (p. 76) that, in the history of morals, reaction against Law as the Law of God develops from a movement of the human spirit with two elements, the one of which we entitled the impulse of "humanism," and the other the impulse of "conscience." Since then our enquiry has explored the former of these impulses and its attendances. Now we may regard ourselves as making contact more particularly with the latter.

§ 5. *The Moral Law as a Moral Sense ; and the attitude of Jesus.*

We have seen that in the esteem of Jesus there is that within us which salutes the Law of God as our own, and which, in the case of such interpretations of that Law as we are constrained to oppose, gives cause for such criticism. The presence and force of this spiritual activity within us is a very general conviction among men ; but the description they give of it, and their estimation of its scope and jurisdiction, vary considerably. In the first place, it is described by some as a "Moral Sense," analogous or even identical with that gift within us whereby we esteem certain things beautiful and others ugly. Herbart, for example, identified goodness with beauty, and exhibited Ethics as a part of Æsthetics. The Greeks were accustomed to mark morality with æsthetic qualities. They considered that τὸ καλὸν (the beautiful) and τὸ ἀγαθὸν (the good) occupied the one field. It is, I think, erroneous to take this as meaning that "the highest moral conduct to the

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Greek must have an element of external magnificence."¹ The Greek attitude here was both simpler and more profound: simpler in this, that it occurred at a stage in philosophical reflection in which the field of morality and that of æsthetic had not been fenced apart so ruthlessly as came to pass in later ages; more profound, because it contended, albeit with a certain ingenuousness, that the moral in its attainment is beautiful and that beauty in its revelation is good.²

In connection with the affinity thus averred between the moral and æsthetic aspects of life, let us delay for a little to see this reflected, as indeed we may, in the bearing of Jesus towards the good life. In his moral pronouncements, the good and the beautiful are much commingled. Recall again his commendation of the woman who anointed his feet (Mark xiv, 6): "She has done a beautiful thing to me"; translated in the English Bible as "a good thing," but by Moffatt as given above. This is in the Greek mode, although even Plato might have missed the significance of those words in the experience of Jesus.

There is wanting in Jesus that puritanism which confuses purity with barrenness, and is chiefly satisfied when life is carved clear of every comely roundness and is reduced in complexion from rose to grey. We translate the Greek term *Sophrosyne* as Temperance, a strictly "moral" word in our ears, indicating caution and grave wisdom. With the Greeks it never meant mere caution; it was much richer than the moral term which now it is. It connoted gentleness, mercy, innocence, and a certain seemly carelessness.

¹ As does Headlam: *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, pp. 222 f.

² cf. Ruskin (in *Sesame and Lilies*)—"Taste is not only a part and an index of morality; it is the only morality."

"The man or woman who is *sophron* walks among the beauties and perils of the world, feeling the love, joy, anger, and the rest ; and through all he has that in his mind which saves."¹ It is the temper that Jesus called child-like, a disposition which issued in behaviour that was good and innocent and pleasant and beautiful in one.

§ 6. *The Moral Law as Conscience.*

Strictly speaking the theory touched upon above proclaims the existence and activity of a "sense" within us which is inexplicable. But no sooner is this proclaimed by its exponents than they proceed to seek after its explanation on the score that the nature of man is social, and that, as it turns out, the Moral Sense, if functioning properly, decrees as right and good what is socially beneficial.

§§ (1) *Butler.*

Bishop Butler made this theory classical by developing and enriching it as the ethical doctrine of Conscience. He amplified the meagre psychology of the others by describing in the one constitution of "human nature" a three-fold activity, namely, the legitimate operation of "Self-love," the native issue of the soul in "Benevolence," but, above all, a dominant principle of reflection to which he gave the name of "Conscience." Man, "from his make, constitution, or nature, is in the strictest and most proper sense a law unto himself. He hath the rule of right within."² He is so by virtue of the "natural supremacy of reflection or conscience within him,"³

¹ Murray : *Rise of the Greek Epic*, p. 27.

² *Upon Human Nature*, Sermon III.

³ Sermon III, opening words.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

a "faculty" within us with "prerogative and natural supremacy," which, "surveys, approves, or disapproves." It is this "by which men are a law to themselves, their conformity or disobedience to which law of our nature renders their actions, in the highest and most proper sense, natural or unnatural."¹ But "you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea—that is, of the faculty itself; and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it."² Its decrees are inherently obligatory. "Your obligation to obey this law is in its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to us to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide. . . . It is our duty to walk in that path, and follow this guide, without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity."³

§§ (2) *Jesus and Conscience.*

We shall seek in vain, I think, in the teaching of Jesus, for anything like a precise form of this admiration of Conscience; Butler's Conscience as the regnant faculty is not there. In our English Bible the word occurs only once in the Gospels (John viii, 9): "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one." But the words, "being convicted by their own conscience," are omitted in the R.V., as wanting

¹ *Upon Human Nature*, Sermon II, par. 9.

² Sermon II, par. 14.

³ Sermon III, par. 5.

JESUS AND CONSCIENCE

in the original. At no point in the Gospel narratives do we find Jesus speaking as who should say "What does your conscience say?" Accordingly, when it is said that Christianity is an ethics of Conscience, the word Conscience must be regarded as interpretive of something else than a directive faculty.

But there is a sentence uttered by Jesus which lies closer to Butler's view of Conscience. It occurs in his answer to the Pharisees who asked him, "And are we blind?": "If you were blind you would not be guilty; but, as it is, you claim to have sight—and so your sin remains" (John ix, 41). This "blindness" is like that "certain unfairness of mind, a peculiar inward dishonesty," of which Butler speaks in a place other than those usually quoted: "a certain unfairness of mind, a peculiar inward dishonesty, the direct contrary to that simplicity which our Saviour recommends, under the notion of *becoming little children*."¹ On reflection, however, we shall see that Butler is engaged here, not with the faculty of Conscience, but with spiritual dispositions, the one simple and honest, the other perverted by vice and worldliness. It is in this field, too, that Jesus treats of "blindness"; he is referring not to Conscience as Butler exhibits it, but rather to that Spirit of truth and sincerity of which he said in another place (Mark iii, 29) that to sin against it is to sin unforgivably. By spirit Jesus did not mean one element within "human nature," implanted as the summary controller of divers faculties and desires; he meant something which suffuses all, and is that in which all are organized in one soul. The late Dr. Bigg may find in Paul ground for the theory that "all men have some knowledge, some 'truth of original inscription', as

¹ Sermon, *Upon the Character of Balaam*, par. 15.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Whichcote called it . . . a voice which is always a command . . . because it conveys the expression of a Will that is higher than our own.”¹ But this is a morality of the *external* sort, and, if it be that of Paul, which I greatly doubt (certainly Deissmann thinks otherwise), it assuredly is not that of Jesus. With Jesus, it is the Spirit that guides; but that is not Conscience as contended for by Butler.

§§ (3) *Jesus and the immediacy of moral judgments.*

Truly, in the intercourse of Jesus with the world about him there is an immediacy in his bearing and judgments such as Butler might expect to see issue from a Conscience that functions as it ought to function. And he counselled his disciples not to cast about in their minds as to the course they ought to take when beset by the difficulties and perilous hardships which he announced would be their lot in future days, but to trust to a guidance which would act forthwith within them. But here again it is not of such a monitor within them as Conscience, that that guidance is to be expected, but of the “Spirit of your Father” (Matt. x, 19 f.). As *Luke* records this promise, the guidance is that of Jesus himself—whether by his continuing presence in the unseen or by the continuing inspiration of the counsel he gave them aforetime, it does not concern us meantime to enquire (*Luke* xxi, 14).

There is an amazing “immediacy” in the conduct of Jesus himself. But the impression this creates is not that of speech and action as issuing from some irreducible “faculty” in charge of thought and impulse. The impression is rather that of a management of self which comes from some recognition of

¹ Bigg: *The Spirit of Christ in Common Life*, p. 255.

THE "IMMEDIACY" OF JESUS

a scheme and enterprise of life about him, which he salutes as germane to the whole constitution of his own spirit. He moves as a master in life who understands the real constitution of things, within which he moves, and who is felt by us to be co-operating to make overt some latent scheme of reality of which he has the secret, and who thereby is not only fulfilling that scheme but is attaining the fulfilment of himself. Word and work flowed from his "nature," in Butler's sense of the term, with a directness that is child-like, with seemingly immediate ease and brightness. By an inversion of the saying of Thucydides about the Athenians, we may put it that, in the earlier part of his career at least, he comported himself in duty as on a holiday. But he was child-like in the way of one who has *recovered* the secret of childhood, and it was to such a recovery he called others who would enter into life indeed, and not to the mere recognition of the existence within them of a statutory mentor that lays down laws. There is thus a generous quality about the spirit of Jesus which differs appreciably from that "moral acid" (in Balzac's phrase) which is savoured in the ethics of Conscience.

I referred a little ago to a view of Paul which presents him as a legalist who inculcates obedience to some such monitor as Butler acclaims. Weinel takes a different view. He maintains that Paul's "whole being was so permeated by the new elements in his life, that when he encountered a difficult problem, he could rely upon a revelation of his subconscious self."¹ In this I am concerned with the phrase, "new elements in his life." Butler has a kindred reference to the enlargement of the moral

¹ Weinel : *St. Paul*, p. 136.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

life by the accession of elements from the same source upon which Paul drew. "Christianity," he says, "lays us under new obligations to a good life, as by it the will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional motives to the practice of it."¹ This must certainly be held to modify that rigid self-sufficiency which Butler is generally accepted as attributing to the "faculty" called Conscience. It implies that Conscience has a content which has been enlarged by Christianity, and, accordingly, that it must be more than an inexplicable "faculty." Conscience with Butler must now be "an intelligible authority whose commands can be understood, by rational reflection." Mackenzie, from whom I quote, says that it is not quite clear whether Butler thought of Conscience thus or as "an inexplicable faculty."² I venture to think that Butler's Intuitionism is not of the latter sort, but that it leans to Conscience as a law of Reason, the view which is exhibited most faithfully by Kant; and to that we shall now direct ourselves.

¹ Sermon XI, (*Upon the Love of our Neighbours*), last paragraph.

² Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, p. 185.

PART TWO

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL STANDARD AS LAW (*Contd.*)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>The Moral Law as exhibited by Kant</i>	
(1) <i>Kant and the function of Practical Reason</i>	95
(2) <i>The first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, and its implications</i>	96
(a) <i>Its "rigorism." The attitude of Jesus compared</i>	97
(b) <i>Its "formalism." The "golden rule" compared</i>	99
(c) <i>Its plea for "self-consistency" and that of Jesus</i>	101
(d) <i>"Sincerity" in Kant and Jesus</i>	102
(e) <i>The worth and dignity of the individual in Kant and Jesus</i>	103
(3) <i>Kant's further formulations of the Categorical Imperative and their implications</i>	109
(a) <i>"The Kingdom of Ends"</i>	110
(b) <i>Kant's comparison of the Kingdom of Ends and the Kingdom of God</i>	111
2. <i>The Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus</i>	
(1) <i>The present equilibrium of the problem</i>	117
(2) <i>Jesus assumed this term as the text of his teaching ; but there was a perplexing hiatus between "text" and "sermon"</i>	119
(3) <i>The Kingdom as "present" and objectively real</i>	121
(4) <i>The Kingdom as "hidden" and awaiting "discovery"</i>	123
(5) <i>The qualifications in those who would "find" the Kingdom</i>	125
(6) <i>This necessary address of spirit as discernible in the bearing of Jesus to Reality</i>	129
(7) <i>This may be described, but with great caution, as a "mystical" address</i>	134
(8) <i>Its designation by Jesus as "child-likeness"</i>	137
3. <i>Jesus and "Love" as the law of human nature</i>	
(1) <i>Compared with "reason."</i>	140
(2) <i>Illustrated in certain notable criticisms of Kant</i>	142
(3) <i>Kant's own appreciation of this in his reference to "imagination"</i>	144

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL STANDARD AS LAW (*contd.*)

§ 1. *The Moral Law as exhibited by Kant.*

We must content ourselves with a somewhat cursory survey of Kant's philosophical enterprise.

§§ (1) *Kant and the function of Practical Reason.*

Man for Kant, and for the vast majority of intelligent persons, is pre-eminently a rational creature. But he is not exhaustively so; if in him Reason were exhaustive and thus invincibly dominant, morality would cease to offer problems. Nay, he is necessarily occupied with emotions, desires, appetites, which are no part of Reason, but distinct from it, and hardly within its control; and so long as these have way with him, morality is bereft of its true character, since he alone may be held as moral whose life is determined by his real self, which is Reason, and autonomously directed by the law of his own being. This suspicion of the appetitive side of man's being is due, of course, to what Kant found as the result of his cognitive research in the realm of Nature. Therein our scientific quest comes to a close in a scheme of things in which Causality rules. Accordingly, man therein is not free, but the resultant, in self and behaviour, of physical or sensible causes. Accordingly, further, the others of the Ideas of Reason, besides

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Freedom, namely God and Immortality, are not secured.

But so soon as we give heed to man as living out his practical life, we recognize straightway that, however little he may sometimes recognize it, he is under an "ought," final and ineradicable. So native is this to his spirit that not only must it involve a "can," and so the possibility, at least, of freedom, but freedom is attained, in so far as man makes duty his sole motive. Man, like all else in Nature, works according to laws; but the determinism of Nature is overcome in a creature that acts not under law, but according to a conception of law. Rational beings alone have the faculty of so acting, that is, "according to principle—in other words, to have a will." "Only the moral law is of itself in the judgment of reason a spring, and whoever makes it his maxim is morally good."¹ Reason as such operates as a "categorical imperative." It is not concerned with consequences, but is rigidly pure and at enmity with all the material or sensational motives which operate as desires.

§§ (2) *The first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, and its implications.*

Such Reason utters itself in a categorical imperative, to be distinguished from those "hypothetical imperatives," which, as Kant defines them, "represent the practical necessity of a possible action as means to something else that is willed (or at least which one might possibly will)," ² and which, accordingly, utter directions for empirical ends. The categorical imperative, as a law universal and exigent on all rational wills, can derive from nothing but Reason,

¹ *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), p. 330.

² *ut sup.*, p. 31.

KANT'S RIGORISM

and Reason as universal, one, and autonomous. It carries Law within itself, but not such law as is obeyed from any other motive than awe and reverence for the majesty of Law itself. The one and ultimate motive in morality is, therefore, reverence for absolute Law. Action on my part, accordingly, must be tested by my interrogating the course I propose for myself, in the court of universal applicability; can I regard the rule of that course as applicable to all, and not merely to myself with my own personal equipment of desires, needs and hopes? It is plain, then, that the Moral Law can be formulated only in some such terms as these—"Act in such a way that, in willing to act, you can will that the maxim (principle) of your act should become a universal law." Such is Kant's formulation of the Moral Law, or, at any rate, his primary formulation of it.

§§§ (a) *Its "rigorism." The attitude of Jesus compared.*

The critics of this supreme maxim foot out their observations upon it with pedestrian accuracy, as might a fatigue party on the march. Its flaws are so detected as now to be almost a convention in criticism. Two imperfections are proclaimed. The first is its neglect of the emotional side of human nature as something perilous and alien to the moral life. There are those who have difficulty in finding words sufficiently impatient to express their scorn of this "rigorism." It is, says Croce, "a theory of uncompromising virtue which ends, as everybody knows, in lip-service and hypocrisy."¹ This is an outrageous criticism. It is juster to complain that if, with Kant, we banish all objects of desire, life is paralysed.

¹ Croce: *The Conduct of Life*, p. 141.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Morality requires that life be taken in all its constituents, and that a unity (with Kant, a "rational" unity) be found which shall organize these in degrees of value. Kant's law of reason can operate in the particular situations of actual life only because what is universalized by it has already been tested and approved in experience. "The specifically moral element, that in which moral obligation is involved, presupposes and rests upon an organization of conduct in which the distinctions of natural good and evil are already involved."¹

In this aspect of the moral life we have already surmised the angle at which Jesus stands. There is a "rigorism" in his moral attitude; but it is not a Kantian severity which denies a place in the good life to the contribution which the humanist elements in experience make to motive. These are given by him a hospitable place, and are only suspected when they cannot be duly and amply organized within the self. He recognizes in life what Adamson has just declared to us, that morality has a history, that Reason can attain the supreme throne, to which Kant appears to exile her, only on the basis of a life already informed with distinctions of right and wrong slowly and experimentally secured, and that Reason operates in the void if it attempt to legislate without that "natural" content. Jesus said, "I tell you, use mammon, dishonest as it is, to make friends for yourselves, so that when you die they may welcome you to the eternal abodes" (Luke xvi, 9). This is one of his hardest sayings. It has to do with the use of that which, when organized apart from the fear and service of God (to use Gore's phrases), is the utmost enemy of the spiritual life. Yet Jesus says, Use it for your

¹ Adamson : *Development of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 112.

KANT'S FORMALISM

own spiritual purposes and the fulfilment of your spiritual destiny. The counsel is, that even "mammon," which can so assert itself within our hearts that God must become servant to it or go (Matt. vi, 24), may be so used as to be valuable in the establishment of God's absolute "realm" within us. "By making wise use of it we may gain for ourselves something that will satisfy and will endure."¹

Another illustration of this attitude of Jesus may be found in his saying, "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke xvii, 10). It does not concern us to enquire whether that "command" is of the external sort, or whether it springs from an autonomous reason within. The point is that a life of obedience to duty, however meticulously that be discharged, is not duly "profitable." The complete motive must be sought in something richer, in that something more which is available only in such generosity of spirit, ready humanism, emotional goodwill, as lie in that level of the soul which Kant, so far as his present formulation of the Moral Law is concerned, would hedge off from the moral life.

§§§ (b) *Its "formalism." The "golden rule" compared.*

I have already touched upon the other of the two criticisms which custom has come to establish against Kant at this point. It has to do with what is regarded as the bare formalism of his definition of the Moral Law. It is conceded that it may afford valuable aid in yielding negative directions for conduct, but that it is infertile as a positive principle. Kant was not

¹ E. F. Scott: *Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 93.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

blind to this that gives colour to the customary charge of formalism.¹ We shall see presently, however, wherein the helpful value of his principle consists; but meantime let us observe that something of this charge of formalism might be adduced against that "golden rule," which critics of Kant's "formalism" are content to salute as fertile in concrete practice: "Whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them" (Matt. vii, 12). To set about adjusting our conduct, on any particular occasion, in accordance with this principle, will be found to mean the filling up of a "form" with a content from elsewhere, very much in the manner necessitated by the particular application of Kant's norm. At the same time, in Kant's case that "filling-up" is rendered supremely difficult so long as he insists that nothing of desire may be admitted within the motive. Life would become a somewhat cumbrous and bleak affair if occasions of conduct might not be entered upon before we had abstracted from the act all elements of feeling, and had examined the maxim of the act in the light of its possible universality. The principle which Jesus enunciates is less rigorous, it has a humanist flavour about it, it has "liking" in it, and as a generalization it is come at more readily. Certainly Jesus is not exceeded by any, in his insistence on principle as pervading the moral life. But he is a stranger to that rational rigorism which calls for the erection of a court of universal reason within us on every occasion wherein decisions in conduct must be made. In the subsequent Christian moralism which emphasized "self-examination" and other processes, whereby the warm-hearted movements of life must be arrested until Reason or Conscience has taken the

¹ See *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, p. 204.

SELF-CONSISTENCY

matter to avizandum and issued its chilly interlocutor, there is something that is alien to the spirit and teaching of Jesus.

§§§ (c) *Its plea for "self-consistency" and that of Jesus.*

It still remains for us to do justice to the deeper significance of Kant here. Certainly his principle is wrongly denuded of an integral part of human experience, and it is abstract in its formality. But it is of greater moment and value in ethics and the moral life than is thus implied. Formal as it is, it is valuable in the insistence it proclaims upon the radical consistency of conduct. Actions must in the innermost resort be consistent, whether with some principle of law or some ideal of life. This is the fruitful significance of Kant's principle.¹ It redounds to Kant's credit that man stands forth from his treatment of him in moral dignity and a characteristic independence, with character confirmed in a fashion that faces the confusion and transience of worldliness and passion with an inherent and invincible worth.²

In this high call for *consistency* in life there is an ample concord in the summons which Jesus delivers. Jesus is not a laggard in his enunciation of what Eucken calls an "absolute unity of the inner principle of life-conduct in general." We have yet to discern what his "inner principle" truly is; we have already felt that it is something richer or more humanist than Kant's exalted Reason. But it is manifest that, with Jesus, conduct must conform to an inner and unifying principle in control of the whole content of

¹ See Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 202 f.; and Rashdall: *Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. I, p. 111.

² cf. Eucken: *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 424.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

life, and in scorn of consequence. I am aware that here and there Jesus appears to admit that "calculation" in conduct, which cannot be tolerated by such a type of maxim. But I propose to leave this over until we come to explore the Standard as Happiness. It will suffice, meantime, to affirm that the final attitude of Jesus is as already indicated: "You must love your enemies," he said, "and help them, you must lend to them *without expecting any return*" (Luke vi, 35); You must forgive the brother who has sinned against you, to "*seventy times seven*" (Matt. xviii, 22)—that is, infinitely, in terms of a principle which, no matter what hopes and calculations are exhausted, cannot itself be exhausted or out-run.

There is in Jesus a Kantian intolerance of all who drift through "a half-thought-out life."¹ He speaks with a pitying scorn of all who behave as did people in the days of Noah (Luke xvii, 27), of men who, with generous impulses towards life's true permanences, fail to get down to rock-bottom and so build on sand (Matt. vii, 26), of those who would have the root of the matter within them, but do not allow it a durable depth (Mark iv, 6), of those who are well enough supplied with generous and industrious inclinations towards moral fulfilments, but with a will that is smothered in the mere tangle of them (Matt. xxi, 28; Matt. xxiii, 3).

§§§ (d) "*Sincerity*" in Kant and Jesus.

With this strict consistence of character there attends a quality of *sincerity* which is of kindred moment in Kant and Jesus. In Kant this quality is primary. The man who would estimate his maxim in any particular action by the test of universality, dare not

¹ See Glover: *The Jesus of History*, pp. 137 ff.

THE WORTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL

so address himself without a sincerity of survey and judgment which is vestally pure and impartial. No less exacting a sincerity is demanded by Jesus. More than once he implied that his followers should seek to bear themselves towards others, and to intervene in their destiny, with the impartiality and outlook of God Himself (see Matt. v, 45 ; Matt. xvi, 23). In nothing did he utter himself with greater stringency than in his denunciation of "hypocrisy." The Pharisees were the target of these shrewdest arrows, not because they were such as believed one thing and practised its opposite, but because the "light that was in them" was darkness" (Luke xi, 35 ; Matt. vi, 23), because they were self-deceived in their soul itself and so sinners against that inward sincerity. Their eye was not "single."

§§§ (e) *The worth and dignity of the individual in Kant and Jesus.*

Again, in the consummate value and dignity with which the individual is endued in Kant's presentation of the moral life as obedience to an autonomous good will within him, there is seen an attitude to man which is that of Jesus. Man arises in Kant's world as one who is equipped with a spiritual endurance that baffles that fatefulness of natural law by which all else is held in thrall.¹

But such an appreciation of the individual's dignity and worth does not excel what we find in the disposition of Jesus towards man. For Jesus, man is the scion* of a house of which the head and procreator is none other than the source of all being, so intimately so, that he may address that creative and prevailing

¹ See Webb: Paper in *Contemporary British Philosophy* (2nd Series), p. 344.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

spiritual power as "My Father." In other than "religious" terms, further, Jesus calculated that not all the substance of this rich and abundant world can weigh down in the balance the value of a single human soul (Matt. xvi, 26; Mark viii, 36; Luke ix, 25). "Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light, and what he did no one can any more undo."¹

In these several exaltations in Kant and Jesus of the individual's dignity and value, there is, however, a difference of *nuance* which is readily enough detected. The difference goes back to the divers ways in which the two teachers savour the inherent essence of the human spirit. With Kant, it is Reason as legislating universally, in a sanctum from which all homely feeling and hearty desire are excluded. With Jesus it is another or fuller government. After all, man as Kant images him, a legislator as described above, draws off in an independence that has much of the severity and superiority that the Stoics evince. In the estimate that Jesus makes of him, man is credited with worth at levels which, in Kant's view, might hardly come at all within the province of value or hope. The tenderness and valiant hopefulness which pulsate in R. L. Stevenson's evangelical description of man, "poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent," are not those of Kant's spirit, but of the spirit of Jesus. "Everywhere," he writes, "some virtue is cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's ineffectual goodness: ah! if I could show you this! if I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of

¹ Harnack: *What is Christianity?* pp. 69 f.

THE WORTH OF ALL MEN TO JESUS

history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting for the lost cause of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls! . . . All their lives long, the desire of good is at their heels, the implacable hunter."¹ Kant salutes as a jewel that good will within the breast, which shines in virtue of its own light; and this is a noble image. But its beams do not readily penetrate those abysses which Stevenson thus described; it is to Jesus, rather, we turn more hopefully for that illumination.

In that "infinite" value and dignity of the moral individual, which we have now detected in Kant and Jesus, a further notable quality is involved; and this, too, is in no small degree shared by them. It lies in the way in which their ultimate moral principle affords room for the individual's developing his moral life in personally distinctive directions, freedom wherein to evince his characteristic gifts and endowments. This is certainly clear in Jesus, and it is implied in Kant. With Kant, the primary starting-point in conduct is that point ("with position, but without magnitude" if you will!) at which the maxim is justified as one which can be made rationally universal. If that is justly attained, the agent is free to seek its fulfilment by such means and courses as his own genius envisages and devises. This arrays conduct in a totally different field from that occupied, for example, by the form of Hedonism which, declaring that Pleasure is the one and only end of conduct, seeks to systematize its achievement by means of a "calculus." On the other hand, in the field of

¹The Essay "Pulvis et Umbra," in *Across the Plains*.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

conduct as Kant maps it, there is *no* map, although a casual attention to his moral plan might appear to deliver us to a cold and rigorous machinery of action. It is not so. There is freedom therein, not only in the sense that conduct is regulated by an autonomous will, but also in the liberty which attends him whose obedience to Reason in that first instance leaves him to operate his maxim according to his own continuing judgment and in accordance with his own particular "gifts and graces."

This freedom is no less manifest in the view of Jesus. There is no teacher who laid less stress on uniformity of conduct in its detail, or of the character that breeds it, than did Jesus. The impression he gives us is that of a liberator of the individuality of men, in all its particularity of temperament and endowment. He is concerned, as was Kant, in putting right something that is fundamental in all men, and then leaving it to work itself out according to their characteristic equipment of mind and serviceableness. This is the significance of such parables as those of the Sower, the Talents, the Hidden Treasure and the like (Mark iv, 3 ff; Matt. xxv, 14; Matt. xiii, 44). Out of this it was that that oracle of moral freedom ultimately issued which found its final expression in Augustine's pronouncement, "Love and do what thou wilt."

I surmise that Dean Inge might be disposed to link Kant's method in ethics with that "hard, threatening, and almost tyrannical law," of which Fenelon speaks in a certain place. He certainly flicks the Kantian as a "bullying" morality—"the rather harsh and bullying ethics of Kantians ancient and modern."¹ But this is unjust. Kant does elevate

¹ Inge: *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, (2nd Ed.) Vol. II, p. 177.

MORAL LOYALTY

morality to that plane on which men attain the "liberty of sons," since he who has adjusted his motive *sub specie æternitatis* may move with something of a god-like and creative freedom thereafter. Truly his moral code is *stringent* indeed; it is a code of morality of a much stricter kind than the average man will readily entertain, stricter, perhaps, than the best men seek or demand.¹ In this it is not unmatched by the stringency that characterizes the ethical demands of Jesus. The accent with which Kant calls for loyalty to the voice of duty, and warns against everything of earth that throws the lightest shadow upon the pure radiance of reason, is not lacking in him who was so incensed at treason to sincerity and truth, that he prophesied eternal woe against the traitors: "He who blasphemes against the holy Spirit will never be forgiven" (Luke xii, 10; etc.). Jesus demanded the utmost loyalty to such light within a man as we can justly compare to the lustre of Kant's jewel within the breast. He rejoiced in those who fixed their mark ahead in the invisible realm of eternal values, and, having done so and taken *themselves* in hand, drove unswervingly: "No one is any use to the Reign of God who puts his hand to the plough and then looks behind him" (Luke ix, 62). This word was spoken to one who sought to delay in following Jesus until he had buried his father "first of all." That was a "religious" duty. But Jesus would not have even that intervene, should a man have seen clearly the higher and morally peremptory duty. Kant, too, looked jealously on all "religious" duties that seemed to him to invade the native purity of devotion to the moral law.² Jesus is

¹ See Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, p. 197.

² cf. Webb: *Essay in Contemporary British Philosophers* (2nd Series), p. 354.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

not removed from Kant in his insistence that once a man has saluted duty in its consummate form, not even may "religion" be allowed to stand in the way of its strict and unequivocal fulfilment.

But, from what I have already submitted of the difference in ethical atmosphere between Jesus and Kant, it goes without further saying that this "stringency" is itself differentiated. We feel the austerity of Jesus vividly enough; in his "commandments" in the Sermon on the Mount he almost flaunts it. I select this last phrase, because it describes that impression of a leadership with banners which his summons to men leaves upon us—a summons as of one who, like the Italian patriot, offered his followers starvation and death or liberty and a kingdom. Jesus calls for a devotion to the visionary life, which involved no less stringent a conquest over the world of sense than Kant proclaimed. But his call is that of a captain in the field, who is not at all ashamed to promise his people the prizes of war, not only the intangible booty of a good conscience fulfilled and the smile of heaven gained, but also the material boons that the moral purist treats with condescension or contempt: "I tell you truly, no one has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel, who does not get a hundred times as much—in this present world homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and lands, together with persecutions, and in the world to come life eternal" (Mark x, 29 f.). Matthew could not brook that "with persecutions," and drew his pen through it! (Matt. xix, 29). But it stands! The life of the adventurer of God will have to fight it out to the very end; but he shall be rewarded, even in this life, with "goods"!

THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE ENLARGED

In contrast with all this, Kant abides as on a mountain apart, disengaged from the almost happy-go-lucky severity of a campaigner among his fellow-campaigners that we catch in Jesus, and calling men to carve with him, in solitude, the law from the tablets of their own conscience. Nevertheless there are kindlier, more humanist and martial elements in Kant than this implies. He is well aware that human life is involved in more than the exercise of unencumbered Reason, that man must have felicity besides the consciousness of duty conformed to the form of law, and that the moral life is a vaporous thing unless it is inwrought in social ends. To do justice to all these vital needs he proceeds by developing the first formula of the Moral Law, and this he does in two successive enhancements. To these let us now proceed.

§§ (3) *Kant's further formulations of the Categorical Imperative, and their implications.*

Kant's second and third expressions of the moral imperative are as follows: the second is, "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as means only"; and the third is, "Act in conformity with the idea that the will of every rational being is a will that lays down universal laws."

We need not concern ourselves unduly as to how Kant makes the transition between these formulations successively, or as to the way in which he now makes use of one and now of another in the management of his ethical theory. Each of these points has given difficulty to his readers.¹

¹ See Rashdall: *Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. I, p. 109.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

§§§ (a) "The Kingdom of Ends."

The features of these new definitions of the Moral Law, with which we shall concern ourselves, are these—the conception of the absolute value of the individual self, and the conception of the "Kingdom of Ends." We have already made sufficient note of the former of these; but on the second we must now dwell for a little. The exhibition of this great conception had better be given in Kant's own words. He writes: "The conception of the will of every rational being as one which must consider itself as giving in all the maxims of its will universal laws, so as to judge itself and its actions from this point of view—this conception leads to another which depends on it, and is very fruitful, namely that of a *kingdom of ends*. By a *kingdom*, I understand the union of different rational beings in a system by common laws. . . . For all rational beings come under the *law* that each of them must treat itself and all others *never merely* as means, but in every case *at the same time as ends in themselves*. Hence results a systematic union of rational beings by common objective laws, i.e. a kingdom which may be called a kingdom of ends, since what these laws have in view is just the relation of these beings to one another as ends and means. It is certainly only an ideal." ¹

Not immodestly Kant calls this a very fruitful ideal. There is much dignity in the image it evokes of a community of free subjects, in each of whom that unemotional Reason, which is the nexus of their community, acts as from as many autonomous thrones as there are persons in the community, and uses them as creators of a "kingdom" to which, as Kant puts it, "a rational being belongs as a member . . .

¹ *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbott) pp. 51, 52.

THE KINGDOM OF ENDS

when, although giving universal laws in it, he is also himself subject to these laws; he belongs to it *as sovereign*, when, while giving laws, he is not subject to the will of any other." ¹

§§§ (b) *Kant's comparison of the Kingdom of Ends and the Kingdom of God.*

This cannot but revive within us that image of the society of independent rationals which the Stoics begat among men. It is inevitable, too, that it should awaken comparison with that "Kingdom" which lies at the heart of the Christian Gospel. Kant himself sets about conducting this comparison. He considers that his "Kingdom of Ends" displays the permanently valuable elements of that other "kingdom," and he is confident that the essence of the Christian array of morality is reached and abidingly defined in his resultant ethical principles. Let us look into this.

Kant regards the *Kingdom of God* (that is the Christian or Gospel conception) as signifying, in one aspect of it at least, a "world in which rational beings devote themselves with all their soul to the moral law." ² Herein the emphasis is on the word "kingdom." The word "God" in the title is emphasized to mark the second aspect of that Kingdom. In this second aspect Kant travels beyond his own Kingdom of Ends, which has to do only with the activity of rational beings who act as legislators, in community, and with a devoted loyalty to a moral law which is revered for its own intrinsic worth and apart from all considerations of "happiness." Kant regarded happiness as a legitimate human heritage, but he found nothing in experience or

¹ *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), p. 225.

² *ut sup.*, p. 52

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

theory to encourage us to believe that virtue and felicity can ever be duly conjoined in this present world ; even if virtue were now completely attainable, which it is not, the natural world would continue to defeat the corresponding felicitous attainment. It was on this account he “ postulated ” an “ immortality ” for man under the solicitous design of “ God,” whereby, as he thought, that gulf would be completely bridged. In the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God, he found a kindred solution of this problem. The problem itself, as just indicated, lies in the difficulty of seeing how the *summum bonum* which has two “ indispensable elements,” namely, virtue and happiness, can be gained, as one complete and unified experience, in the natural world in which we at present live and move and endeavour to fulfil our real being. “ The moral law,” he affirms, “ does not of itself promise happiness, for, according to our conceptions of an order of nature in general, this is not necessarily connected with obedience to the law.”¹ But Christian morality, he finds, supplies this defect—that is, the difficulty of finding happiness cohere in virtue—by its conception of a “ kingdom ” of which God is the dispenser ; it proclaims a Kingdom of God, “ in which nature and morality are brought into a harmony foreign to each of itself, by a holy Author who makes the derived *summum bonum* possible. Holiness of life is prescribed to them as a rule even in this life, while the welfare proportioned to it, namely bliss, is represented as attainable only in eternity.”² One is tempted to delay here to complain that this is barely a just estimate of the Christian view either of “ holiness ” and “ bliss,” or of the significance, at any rate in the teaching of Jesus, of “ eternity ”

¹ *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbot), p. 226.

² *ut sup.*, pp. 225 f.

KANT AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

and what is attainable therein. We shall come back to that. Our course, meantime, is to return to our comparison of the Kingdom of Ends and that aspect of the Kingdom of God which more definitely corresponds to it. Kant himself makes it plain that, in his judgment, the ultimate principle of these two Kingdoms is an identical principle. After avowing as we have noted, that the Kingdom of God as a "theological" conception affords a scheme whereby the earthly antimony of virtue and happiness is resolved, he proceeds, "Nevertheless, the Christian principle of *morality* itself is not theological (so as to be heteronomy) but is autonomy of pure practical reason, since it does not make the knowledge of God and his will the foundation of these laws, but only of the attainment of the *summum bonum*, on condition of following these laws, and it does not even place the proper *spring* of this obedience in the desired results, but solely in the conception of duty, as that of which the faithful observance alone constitutes the worthiness to obtain those happy consequences."¹ He finds the Christian principle of morality to be expressed in the precept, "Love God above everything, and thy neighbour as thyself."² This precept he regards as "pure and unyielding, as a moral precept must be."³ It is for him his own "autonomy of pure practical reason." He has trouble over that word "love" in it, and he spends labour in seeking to rid it of all "pathological" connotation;⁴ but we shall not follow this farther.

As regards his trouble with the second portion of the "Christian precept," he is very jealous, as we have already seen, of every attitude towards

¹ *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), p. 226.

² *ut sup.*, p. 175.

³ *ut sup.*, p. 225 n.

⁴ See *ut sup.*, pp. 175 ff.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

“ God ” that has an emotional flavour ; even duties towards God are coldly regarded by him. His interest really lies in what is signified by the phrase of the precept, “ Love thy neighbour as thyself.” This, however, he endeavours to conform to his own moral principle by stripping it of every characteristic that can be connoted by the word “ love.” The phrase may certainly be brought within the ambit of his second and third formulations of the Moral Law, in their insistence that we should regard all other rational individuals as fellow-members with us in a Kingdom of Ends. But, however much we may trim the word “ love,” it is impossible to identify such formulation with the Christian precept. Jesus intended by “ loving our neighbour ” an attitude and moral activity which signified more than “ respect ” for others, more than a merely dutiful co-operation in a Kingdom of Ends, and much more than Kant allowed when he decreed that in all this we may seek to further the “ happiness ” of our neighbour, but never his “ perfection.”¹ It is true that a man’s will is his own, and no one can operate it for him. His “ perfection ” must be based on his own rational activity. But life were an ungenerous affair if it were denied us to do all that lies in our power, as fellow-citizens in a Kingdom of Ends, to guide and support others, even in those personal and autonomous endeavours by which they achieve their personality, and, at least, to ease the way for them by removing, as we may, such obstacles as confine and baulk their development. This may rightly be spoken of as “ seeking their perfection.” However Kant may have intended his dictum to apply, it certainly gives the impression of inculcating a bearing

¹ *Kant’s Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), p. 296.

THE TWO KINGDOMS CONTRASTED

to our fellows, which, in the mission of Jesus, would have taken the very heart out of it. It can hardly be said of Jesus that he limited himself to seeking the "happiness" of others, and abstained on moral grounds from consulting and advancing their "perfection." Indeed, it were truer to say that the latter was his primary concern and the former very surely secondary. At no point, indeed, did he seek to constitute himself the usurper of any man's will; but he laboured to reinforce it, and this he did, sometimes with so wonderful an intimacy, that those he helped were accustomed to declare that it was no more themselves but the very "mind" of their benefactor that now lived within them.

Already it must be clear to us that the comparison by which Kant seeks to make his Kingdom of Ends square in a fashion with the Kingdom of God, is very uncertain, or, at the most, that it evinces a similarity of a formal and infertile character.

Perhaps the vital point whereon the comparison falters, which Kant instituted between the Kingdom of Ends and the Kingdom of God, is this, that the former is for Kant confessedly no more than an ideal. It is unattainable in this world, since its attainment waits upon the individual's achievement of virtue, an exact fulfilment throughout of the moral law, and upon a like achievement of it by all who have dealings with him in the one society of humanity. How does the Kingdom of God compare with this in prospect? Certainly, the answer is: if by the Kingdom of God is meant a condition of society in which all have attained the level of spiritual life which Jesus proclaimed and exemplified, there would seem to be as little likelihood of its consummation as there is in the case of the other

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Kingdom. It, too, so far as this goes, would be "only an ideal."

But the ideality of these two Kingdoms is not an identical ideality. Kant's is ideal in the sense that it could never in any possibility be secured in this world. The other is ideal in the sense that it is a vision indeed, but not inherently impossible. The complete extension and the world-wide establishment of the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed is, at least, a possibility, however halting may have been the expectation,¹ even on the part of Jesus, with regard to that consummation. On the other hand, the summary array of the Kingdom of Ends is declared from the outset to lie beyond the scope of all possibility. The difference is to be found in the attitude of these two sages to the *extensive* aspect of their Kingdoms, on the one part, and, on the other, to their *intensive* aspect. With Kant the Kingdom as extensive was not simply difficult or far from practicable; it was impossible. With Jesus, if we credit the scholars to whom I have just referred you in a footnote, the Kingdom as extensive is something of which we may indeed have little hope, but inherently it is not impossible. This divergence is to be explained by their attitude to the intensive aspect. Kant was persuaded that no man anywhere can achieve that condition of virtue which must be achieved by him and, further, by all his fellows, before the Kingdom can come to pass. Jesus, on the contrary, regarded it as possible that a man can be virtuous; nay, he called them "to be perfect" (Matt. v, 48), and he invited them to accomplish, as within their reach, a status of spirituality which He described with no less

¹ See Inge: *Outspoken Essays* (1st series) pp. 249 f.; and Bruce: *The Kingdom of God*, p. 340.

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

heroic and exalted a title than "sons of God." He spoke, too, of the Kingdom being "within you," or "in your midst" (Luke xvii, 21). The latter is now a favourite rendering of the phrase. Even so, it signifies that, in the personality and activity of one man, at least, that is, Jesus himself, the Kingdom of God was in being.

But, so soon as we recognize this, it is obvious that we are come to a significance of the word Kingdom, in respect of which Kant no longer bears company with Jesus. The Kingdom of Ends has meaning only as applied to the social consummation of virtue as that is made good in a completed commonwealth of all virtuous individuals. The Kingdom of God has that meaning; but it is also a title given by Jesus, though not by Kant, to the presence and fulfilment of virtue within the individual. In this latter sense it is equivalent to the effectual obedience, on the part of a person, of the categorical imperative in Kant's scheme. Such effectual obedience, however, Kant declared to be impossible; but Jesus regarded as possible, and, indeed, exigent, the establishment of the Kingdom of God within a man.

§ 2. *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus.*

I propose to pass on now to consider what is intended by Jesus in his use of the term, the Kingdom of God. For long this has been the storm-centre of debate in estimating his mission and teaching. But the temper and resultants of the controversy have become more equable.

§§ (1) *The present equilibrium of the problem.*

No less zealous an exponent of the eschatological view than Kirsopp Lake has declared that, "at present

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the question has apparently reached equilibrium by the general recognition that it is impossible to excise or to explain away the passages in the Gospels in which the Kingdom of Heaven is clearly regarded as future, and that it is equally impossible to ignore those in which it is regarded as a present reality. Probably, however, it has even now not been sufficiently perceived that the solution of the problem is not to be found in the literary criticism of the Gospels, but in the history of the phrase, *Kingdom of God*. This rendered inevitable the double use of the phrase. Sometimes it was used strictly, and referred to a present reality within the grasp of all willing to reach out to it, and accept the conditions imposed on its attainment, of which Jesus was so frequently speaking. But at other times, by an entirely natural extension of its meaning, it was used of the period when the recognition of the sovereignty of God would be universal.”¹

The controversy may be truly described as having reached equilibrium. But this is not to be taken as implying that in the avowal of his message Jesus presents himself with two interpretations of the Kingdom that stand apart like parallel lines. Certainly Lake suggests that they are otherwise, that the “double use” has its own inevitability. They are as horns issuing from the one head. And yet they are to many as the horns of a dilemma. Jesus himself appears to some of his interpreters as showing no real reconciliation between them. They comprehend him sufficiently clearly as proclaiming the dawn and approaching plenitude of a real spiritual commonwealth of God in Palestine and in the world at large, and they have a like perception of the birth and

¹ Kirsopp Lake: *Landmarks of Early Christianity*, pp. 24 f.

TRANSFIGURATION OF THE KINGDOM

culture of a "rule of God" in the individual souls of men and women; but they are at a loss to know which of these, if either, was primary in the esteem of Jesus.

§§ (2) *Jesus assumed this term as the text of his teaching; but there was a perplexing hiatus between "text" and "sermon."*

As to all this we do well to begin by remarking that whatever refinements Jesus wrought on the "extensive" character of the Kingdom that engaged the dreams and desires of his nation, it was in contact with that communal vision he began the proclamation of his message. He issued as from the circle of John the Baptist, after having submitted to the exhortations and tests of that messianic prophet. Certainly, as we now know, and as, indeed, his hearers very soon came to detect, albeit with a wondering perplexity, there were depths and strange implications in his message, which differentiated it from his forerunner's, and marked it as something apart and original. But the *form* of it continued to be that of John's oracles; it was of the Kingdom of God he announced himself as an usher, who at the same time revealed in cryptic hints to the discerning that his office therein was higher than that, as high, indeed, as that of viceroy in that Realm.

It was inevitable that he should assume the Kingdom as the theme of his mission, and also that what he said of it should at the outset be recognizably concerned with the needs and hopes of his nation. The ground on which these statements are based lies, as regards the first, in the fact, which all sober criticism admits, that in his baptism he was revealed to himself as the "annointed one" whose destiny it was to

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

accomplish the Kingdom. As Messiah, it was with the Kingdom in some form he had to engage himself.¹

Further, he was constrained to launch his mission in such terms as would recognizably reveal him in the train of the prophetic helpers of his people. He had dealt in mere moonshine, had he arrayed his message otherwise. He had failed of all audience whatever, had he sought to commend it in other categories than those which alone filled their thoughts and furnished the form of their aspirations.

Jesus came from the desert, where he had adjusted himself to the vision of his office, to preach the Kingdom of God. Very soon his hearers awoke to a puzzling disjunction between text and sermon. It was as though a man were to announce Housing as his theme and proceed to descant on the booths of the *poverelli*. Indeed, it was very like that. A booth is a house, and such a society as that of the early Franciscans is a kind of kingdom. But a housing programme is not secured in a conclave of friars, nor is Rome dispossessed by talk of flowers, birds and little children. And yet, in spite of this dislocation of text and sermon on the part of Jesus, his hearers caught here and there echoes of the customary homily, and, in the amazing practicality of the preacher in his casual excursions in the field of social betterments, they were ready to see auguries of the coming revolution, and in himself a more than promising actor in it. Above all, it consorted with their anticipations that Jesus declared the Kingdom to be an heavenly plan, the purpose and programme of God for His people, His dispensation, a divine fulfilment which God had within His own hand, for which all men should be on the eager outlook, but in which the

¹ See Bousset: *Jesus*, p. 180.

THE KINGDOM AS ACTUAL

part they had to play was not that of men on whom God had to depend for its realization, but of men who should see to it that they were competent to enter into it.¹

§§ (3) *The Kingdom as "present" and objectively real.*

But we may not conclude that the Kingdom is a scheme held apart by God, in retention in the heavens, and about to be superimposed on the earth. The picture we venture to attribute to the expectations of Jesus must be nothing like that of Plato's "Republic," a dream in the mind of man of some ready-made plan in the hands of God which He purposes dropping upon the world as a sieve through which the wicked shall pass to destruction and the "chosen" be gathered in terrestrial blessedness. If we must have an analogy, the better one would be that of Plato's realm of Ideas which are not simply a celestial economy, or a world which may or may not be correlated with our world of sense, but the inherent and informative reality of this plane of existence, however dimly we may detect their presence and operation among us. It is very clear that in some such fashion Jesus envisaged the reality of the Kingdom. It was for him "a present reality," as Lake declares. Truly, he taught his disciples to pray "Thy Kingdom come"; but this petition concerned the plenitude and full demonstration of a Kingdom which was not then absent and detached in the heavens, and about to be lowered in radiant completeness upon the cities and fields of Palestine, but was already the pervasive significance of the world.

This is clear from many of his declarations. A convincing instance may be found in his speech to

¹ cf. E. F. Scott: *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 48.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the scribe in Jerusalem, during the colloquies in Holy Week, who conferred with him about the commandments and added a sentence about the relative values of "love" and "holocausts and sacrifices," which warmed the heart of Jesus. Noting "his intelligent answer," Jesus said to him, "You are not far off the Realm of God" (Mark xii, 34). It is manifest that such nearness is not a *temporal* one; by which I mean, there is no suggestion here that very soon, in the imminent theophany of the Kingdom, this man would be eligible for stepping up into it. It can only mean that as the man stood there, there was a Kingdom about him, and that he was so posted at the entrance that one step would make him a citizen of it then and there. The Kingdom was a present reality, with gates already open to receive those who had eyes to see. It was so manifest to Jesus, that, as we already detected, it was evidently difficult for him to understand how people could be blind to it. He saw men and women entering into it—"The taxgatherers and harlots are going into the Kingdom of God before you" (Matt. xxi, 31); and he foresaw, both by this and by the large optimism of his own spirit, that consummation of the Kingdom which was to glorify the end of that age.

The Kingdom must be regarded as a contemporary "presence" of an objective kind. It was there in such a form that people who listened to him could and did enter into it. This is plain from his speech to the scribe already noted. That speech does not imply merely that the scribe had almost the due qualification which made entrance open to him. Nor does it imply that his entrance into it was identical with his "accepting Christ," to use a modern phrase. Jesus speaks to him of the Kingdom as something

THE KINGDOM AS CONCEALED

existing independently of any individual's existence or endowment, even of his own.

This fact, if so we must regard it, has incidentally philosophical implications of a very interesting kind. It implies a conviction on the part of Jesus of what is called the objectivity of spiritual values. The contents of the Kingdom for him are clearly such values. The whole course of his teaching consists in an endeavour to show to men that the real world is not to be found in such things as "moth and rust doth corrupt and thieves break through and steal" (Matt. vi, 19), but in such things as we classify conveniently under the categories of the true, the good, and the beautiful. We are all aware of the controversy waged between those who, on the one hand, regard these as only subjective creations of our own, more or less conveniently pragmatic symbols and instruments for edging our way through the flux of reality, and those, on the other hand, who affirm their objective existence and worth. We may note, therefore, at present, but with a promise to ourselves to see more of this further on, that to Jesus the realm of spiritual values is other than relative to our own creative fancy, other than an array of categories we erect for ourselves in a rather vain attempt to achieve orderliness and system in our contest with oppressive Nature, that, on the contrary, those values have objective validity and are real existents.

§§ (4) *The Kingdom as "hidden" and awaiting "discovery."*

Should we ask, What is the sphere of such values and in what do they appear?—our enquiry would move into a wide field of debate. There are those who are disposed to believe that it is within "persons"

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

and in their mutual relationships that such values are found, maintained and possibly increased, and that in Nature, as distinguished from these, they are not thus detected. The impression we receive of the mind of Jesus in this matter is, I think, otherwise. There does not seem to be any real discontinuity for him between the Kingdom of God in man and in "Nature." In his efforts to indicate to his disciples where this world of spiritual worth is to be discerned, he moves from "the poor in spirit" to children and to the flowers of the field and the birds of the air, as in a continuum of perception, as though the Kingdom were a presence that extends pervasively, however it may differ here and there in degrees of emphasis, throughout the one world. Accordingly he turns almost as readily to "Nature" as to "persons" when he would indicate where people should look to detect the Kingdom.¹ Among persons he points to very distinctive types as the quarter in which to look for it. Such are children; and men and women who are aliens to the spirit of pride and hardness of the so-called civilized world, the "poor in spirit"; and "sinners" who have generously given way to the surge of the warm and pristine emotions of the human heart; and harlots who in their tragical surrenders retain beneath a mask of steely shrewdness a soul of kindliness and generous understanding of life which a

¹ As regards this, a just illustration may be found in Chesterton's appreciation of the way in which Browning detected the justification of experience in the realm of Nature as aptly as in philosophical interpretations apart. Let me quote it. "Had Browning simply answered the question 'Is life worth living?' with the real, vital answer that awaited it in his soul, he would have said as likely as not, 'Crimson toadstools in Hampshire.' Some plain glowing picture of this sort left on his mind would be his real verdict on what the universe had meant to him . . . To Browning himself hope was traced to something like red toadstools. His mysticism was not of that idle and wordy type which believes that a flower is symbolical of life; it was rather of that deep and eternal type which believes that life, a mere abstraction, is symbolical of a flower."—G. K. Chesterton: *Robert Browning*, pp. 182 f.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE KINGDOM

word of real love is capable of unbosoming in a fulness as of a mother's breasts ; and soldiers, even of an alien race (Matt. viii, 5 ff.), who treat life with the simplicity of faith and dutifulness that belongs to a patriarchal age. In such quarters as these Jesus looked and found signs and currents of the Kingdom of God. Not everyone so detected it. *It lay concealed therein.* And this is a momentous characteristic of the Kingdom that was already in being in the world. It was concealed and waited on re-discovery. But in the esteem of Jesus its disguises might readily be penetrated by those whose spirit was duly awake and decidedly active.

Many of the sayings of Jesus make plain this characteristic of the Kingdom as a realm that is all about us but concealed. It is a treasure hidden in a field (Matt. xiii, 44), or as a coin that has passed out of sight in a woman's home (Luke xv, 8), or as a pearl of great price that awaits the persistent seeker (Matt. xiii, 45). The "parables of the Kingdom" are of two kinds. There are those which deal with the *development* of the Kingdom, such as the Seed, the Tares, the Mustard Seed. But of another kind are those I have cited above. These are parables of the *discovery* of the Kingdom. They imply that the Kingdom is already in the world, but that men are blind to its presence or oblivious of it, and that it awaits to be revealed to those who have the eyes to see, who have an idea where to look for it, and who address themselves to the quest in a particular way.

§§ (5) *The qualifications in those who would "find" the Kingdom.*

In several manners he described the kind of address they must evince who would behold and enter the

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Kingdom. But they are all of them characterized by a certain forcefulness. The discovery is theirs who give themselves to it with the energy of a man digging, or of a woman at her "spring-cleaning," or of a chapman hunting from place to place for precious stones. He declared that a certain "violence" is needed, and that it must be "taken by force" (Matt. xi, 12). In one place he exhibits it as the enterprise of a king arraying himself to capture a city (Luke xiv, 31). But in so far as this would imply an expedition against an alien citadel and its booty, it is not quite in the line of his more intimate description of it. It is in line if by the city is intended our native city from which in some fashion we have for so long been exiles. His more intimate description of it is found in the images already referred to: it is the "violence" of a woman turning her house inside-out to recover her own, or that of a digger or merchant who have the equivalent of the discovery within their own hands. More intimate still is his description of the "violence" in terms of the amazing forcefulness of seeds in the earth. It is finally intimate in terms of the violence of human birth (John iii, 3). A man must be "born again" if he would find himself within the heritage that is his and that awaits his assumption of it. Birth is a violent process. It is an issue from an imprisoning darkness into the sunshine, and within a realm, from which the nascent creature has, all unknown to himself, been drawing life and nourishment all the while. There is that about him which created him at the first and is the primary and chiefest factor in his emergence. At the same time he comes forth partly by his own exertions, which are forceful enough and, in their degree, as essential to the process as the

SPIRIT REQUIRED FOR THE KINGDOM

other. The same elements obtain in "re-birth." In *John* Jesus says that man is "born of the Spirit," the creative action of that in which, in all things, we borrow our life, is the prevailing power in it; but, at the same time, such a co-operative activity on the part of the creature is needed as is known in physical birth. Paul, the inspirer of *John*, has analysed that activity for us. It is a spirit within man which shows itself in such "fruits" as these, "love, joy, peace, good-temper, kindliness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. v, 22 f.). These he intimates as the temper and disposition made manifest in them that are born of the Spirit. But these are also symptomatic of the kind of spirit that must be active in him who would pass from darkness into light, and recognize and inherit the realm of air and sunshine within which he has for long been living, and from which he has been drawing life and sustenance the while, but with as little real consciousness of it all as the child has in his mother's womb.

You have only to pass through the Gospels with that catalogue of Paul's as a touchstone, to find that he has most aptly and happily hit upon the qualifications which Jesus demanded of those who would enter the Kingdom. Jesus remarks "faith" as the secret of entrance, or "trust," or "love," terms which can readily be drawn out to cover Paul's enumeration as their constituents. There is no single term anywhere in the Gospels which certainly covers all the constituents. The best is "love." Sublime word! A banner which betokens the most thrilling and devastating of all the violences known among men! And as Jesus used it, it possessed that feature. But the ruddy hue of it and the vigour and sublime abandon with which it sweeps through the Gospels,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

have been so diminished, not only in the thought of those to whom the Christian cult is merely an anæmic and sentimental effeminacy, but in the customary thought of those who still pretend to practise its behests, that love of the Christian sort is lightly esteemed, either as an ideal of generosity so refined that it concerns none lower than angels in their chill disembodiment, or as a bearing on our part among men so soft and tolerant as to be maudlin, the comportment of silly sheep in a world of robust and heroic rovers.

All this, of course, is a caricature of "love" as Jesus and Paul understood it, and announced and exhibited it in their own lives. But that such a misinterpretation is possible, and indeed is prevalent, should warn us to be careful as we continue to use the word as exhausting the significance of that profound and forceful adjustment of Spirit whereby the Kingdom is disclosed to us. I remark again that Jesus does not limit himself to it to denote that adjustment. In course of time, as is seen in the Johannine epistles, "love" became the pre-eminent term; but in the guidance Jesus himself gave to those who would find the Kingdom, "love" is not the invariable direction, as we have already noted.

It is difficult even to attempt a single term in which that quality of spirit in all its modes can be caught and displayed. There is love in it, and faith, and trust, and the quick succession of lovely words which Paul employs. It is a rich and multiplied temper of the soul, which leans out towards Nature with joy and trust, which bears itself among other souls with good-temper, kindness, gentleness, generosity, which addresses itself to the daily task with fidelity, which is balanced in self-control in the tumult of the

THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

world and no less in all solitudes, which is full of peace. Jesus spoke of there being a "word" of the Kingdom. But we cannot find it, in the sense of a word as a single term. By "word" is meant the whole substance of what he uttered in speech and gesture and by the breath of his presence. The only one word which would express the temper of soul with which we are trying to deal, is the word "Jesus" itself. Please do not regard such a statement as merely rhetorical! It concerns a growing conviction that in him as in none other we detect that unity of soul wherein the various elements we have already enumerated consort and manifest themselves as one consistent and persistent attitude to reality. It was not as a mere borrower from Alexandrian wisdom, but as a household disciple of Jesus, that *John* found in Jesus himself "the word" (*John* i, 1).

§§ (6) *This necessary address of spirit as discernible in the bearing of Jesus to Reality.*

When all is said, we may do well meantime to regard "love" as the nearest approach to the content of the "word." And what further can we apprehend of its significance and of the attitude and approach to reality which it involves? The way to meet these questions is almost naturally to try to savour the spirit Jesus himself was of, and to try to sense the quality of his bearing to nature, men, and the spirit inherent in all things. This requires an insight to which I cannot pretend, beyond a very meagre and hesitating measure. Nevertheless I must seek to describe the impression which is made upon my spirit as I behold his comportment in these three fields.

His attitude to *the life of Nature* gives the impression

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

at one time of a spirit that is quietly and attentively wondering and worshipful, as is a child in the presence of holy things, at another time of a spirit of almost boyish fraternity. Never is there a sign in him of that hardened condescension to the creatures of the field to which all nature is a mere human utility; nor, on the other hand, do we find any flavour in him of that in us which uses Nature only to beget on her the offspring of our intellectual perplexities and emotional torments. He has taken time to wait upon the tiniest things in earth with open-eyed reverence and joy, with so frank and pleasant a patience, that they have caused their secret to steal upon his soul. Pure, wholesome, wide-awake, quiet, mirthful, child-like, boyish, lover-like, mother-like, brother-like, is the patient regard he offers the array of "things," the green and brown density and flicker which alone the realm of Nature is to thousands of men and women, and beholds each bird and flower and blade of grass emerge with its own tale to tell, its own movement to contribute to the one "dance of life." This, if you like, is "love." It is, in great simplicity, that open-souled insight into Nature which Blake had, but which he could only express in words that baffle and confound the multitude, and which, as we are told, defeated his own attempts to explain them, when he would. It is the spirit in which Wordsworth, the greatest of all poets of the "spirit of man," drew near to Nature, and found there the "mystery of the Kingdom."

In the second place, the spirit in which Jesus so approached *children, and men and women*, that he found the Kingdom "among them," may very well be called "love." It is not really other than that attitude and approach to Nature which we have tried

THE BEARINGS OF HIS SPIRIT

to discern—very imperfectly, I grant you. He *looked* at people. That look of his travels through all the story of his dealings with persons like a continuous shaft of light. It engaged them with an attention that was patient and expectant. It penetrated the differences of bodily shape, clothes, social settings, and the effect which the judgments of the world had upon their faces, the tenour of their speech, and the very pose of their bodily movements, as though labels of variant humanities had been affixed to them, and coming upon the man himself, saw with awe and shame and sympathy that they were all creatures of an identical majesty, in spite of every label ; saw, too, with love and faith and hope, that a kingly glory was latent in all of them. There was a pristine sympathy in the outflow of his mind and heart towards them, of so simple and unsophisticated a kind, that their secrets were patent to him. Even the dullest of them felt he was engaged in sharing his secrets with them. It was more than an understanding of them. It was an identification of himself with them. It gave him to find himself in them, or in nearly all of them. In children and in humble and hunted folk, in those whom the generous passions of the human heart had submerged beneath the proud and puritanical tide of the world, he was given to detect the infant radiance or the flickering but unquenchable embers of the light that was the all-pervading sunshine of his own soul. The type of “sinner” that chiefly resorted to him lives in a world that is base and horrible enough : but it is a world, also, in which a child-like simplicity, a generosity of heart, a trustfulness, a tenderness or forgiveness, a divine carelessness, prevail, such as are hardly found among the worldly-wise or the “unco-guid.” Among these,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

lying beneath dull and even foul earth, as a treasure lies hidden in a field, he saw glints and veins of the Kingdom ; and as the sharp but kindly share of his word and spirit passed through, the treasure was disclosed to themselves and to all the world. Before the princes and prelates who rode upon the hump of the world, the harlots, the publicans and the sinners passed into the Kingdom at a step ! Thus by " love " he detected and uncovered the Kingdom that had ever lain at hand as a concealed presence in the souls of men.

In the third place, it is open to us to recognize that it was by the exercise of this self-same spirit that Jesus so traversed the realm of nature and man, and saw the kingdom lurk in them, that he attained the consummate *vision of a supernal King* therein. Even though it be contended that his apprehension of God was *sui generis*, an endowment of his soul that defies all research, nevertheless it may be reverently surmised that it was in his environment that the gift which was his blossomed within his consciousness and became the controlling passion of his whole life, and that it was as he explored that environment in the spirit we have endeavoured to exhibit, that his discernment of eternal values in it fused in the one absorbing conception of the royal divinity that informs all things :

" A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought."¹

¹ Wordsworth : " Poems of the Imagination," xxvi.

HIS SPIRIT THAT OF A "POET"

I summon Wordsworth, not for the irritating purpose of adding a mere embroidery to these sections of my theme, but because the *métier* of the spirit of Jesus in the relationships described is that of a poet, and of such a poet as Wordsworth is, in appreciable measure. At an earlier stage in our enquiry, in that impressionist sketch we made of Jesus as we surveyed *Mark*, we were laid hold upon by this quality of his soul. Now we are come to see more definitely something of its constitution. But let us now, as then, avoid that image of the poet which sees in him a dreamer of irresponsible dreams, slack and vague in mind, readily captured by pretty conceits which have no more than an accidental relation to things as they really are, brooding with indeterminate thought and feeling on the blur of Nature and man, on the off-chance that some "revelations" will somehow steal upon him. This is not the way of those travailling questioners of life which the great poets are. Theirs is that tense and concentrated application of their whole germinating and conceiving spirit, which we have seen operate in Jesus, and which he described as "violence." It is aptly associated with the endurance and pains of birth. Nor must we think of it as a question of emotion, uninformed by clear thought and the urge of volition. We have indeed agreed to entitle it "love"; and love, though it is unmistakably informed with the urge of volition, is regarded by most as an emotion that takes little to do with "reason" or even baffles it. Such love is not the spirit by which Jesus explored reality and found the Kingdom in ready existence. Certainly his spirit was pervaded with *emotion*. But, in the first place, it was a direct and directive emotion; it turned to action as soon as it stirred within him;

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

as kindness within him it immediately put forth hands of kindness ; it had a *creative urge* about it, and was incomplete until it gathered to itself, in a union as absorbent as is physical love in its summation, the objects of its interest. But it was as fully pervaded with *thought* : His "look" burned with the light of reason. When he would have people give themselves to the revelation of eternal things that lurk in the simplicities of fields and nests, he invited them to something other than an abandonment to sentiment ; he directed them to "consider" the wild birds and the lilies of the field (Matt. vi, 26, 28). He blamed people who would not use their wits to "discern the signs" of impalpable happenings (Matt. xvi, 3). He invited people to brood upon the unanalysible emotion which filled their hearts in their love of their children. This is an ultimate experience ; but he struck through the emotion with a shaft of thought, and stirred it with arguments that reached up to God (Matt. vii, 11).

§§ (7) *This may be described, but with great caution, as a "mystical" address.*

The bearing of spirit by which Jesus addressed himself to nature, man, and the living constituency of reality, and so attained their secret, and by which he looks to our doing likewise, is certainly very difficult to define. It represents a fusion of thought, emotion, and will such as may be called "mystical," if care be taken with that abused and fretted word. Mysticism is too often interpreted and practised as a subjective indulgence of dreams and aspirations within the soul which the actor would fain impose upon reality, without any real enquiry as to whether reality is prepared to bear the imposition. This is that

HIS SPIRIT AS "MYSTICAL"

"acting" mysticism which Deissmann distinguished properly from "re-acting" mysticism, the latter alone being wholesome, as relating reality and experience.¹ The truer mysticism, according to this judge, posits an objective secret which is revealed in a contact wherein the spirit of man, in its totality of thought, feeling, and volitional activity, comes with something like immediacy upon its kindred spirit without. The attitude of Plato, and his interpretive approach to "things" and to life, was of that mystical kind. At least so Jowett thinks; and he offers a definition of mysticism, in that connection, which is very suggestive. "By mysticism," he says, "we mean . . . the concentration of reason in feeling, the enthusiastic love of the good, the true, the one, the sense of the infinity of knowledge and of the marvel of the human faculties."²

Again, we must not describe as mystical the spirit of such as Jesus, if mysticism is to be regarded as operating through "a special faculty of intuition." Matthews finds this psychological heresy maintained in Evelyn Underhill's *Mystic Way*, and quizzes it very properly.³ He justly indicates that there is no intuitive faculty that is independent of the inter-related activities of thought, feeling and volition. He indicates, further, that this inter-relation may be so intimate and its address to reality so "immediate" as to come within that type of "knowledge" to which Spinoza gave the name of *scientia intuitiva*, "an insight," in Matthews' words, "which grasps the conclusion and the grounds of the conclusion in one act." He considers that "this is the kind of knowledge

¹ See Deissmann: *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, p. 193.

² Jowett: *Plato*, "Phædrus" i, 423.

³ Matthews: *Studies in Christian Philosophy*, p. 14.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

to which all other kinds are striving," and he declares "that if a complete and adequate insight into the meaning of the universe and of human life should emerge in the course of human history, it would be of the intuitive character, and would manifest those qualities which we have noticed in the teaching of Jesus."

I think the truth of the matter lies in that direction. But we must gently cavil at the suggestion I find implied in certain of those phrases that such an "intuitive knowledge" is far to seek among men. We consider that we have already seen something of it as active in the great poets. Quiller Couch regards it as the native significance of a whole array of poets;¹ and he quotes with aptitude Wordsworth's lines from *Tintern Abbey*, as expressive of the presence of this endowment:

" With an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

This is that "intuitive knowledge" which mysticism commends, and which we have discerned as the activity of the spirit of Jesus. An analysis of it is directly implied in Wordsworth's phrases such as is recognizably the assortment we have already more than once defined to ourselves. There is "thought" in it, a quiet and reverent attention and observation of the order of reality; there is "emotion" in it, the response of a heart in joy; and there is the outflow of the mind and heart in communion with the life in things, as creaturely and at the same time creative will.

¹ See Quiller Couch: *Studies in Literature* (1923) pp. 90 ff.

HIS SPIRIT AS "CHILD-LIKE"

§§ (8) *The designation of this spirit by Jesus as "child-likeness."*

But I return to pursue what I said of this "intuitive knowledge" as not being something that never appears among men, or only in the choicest spirits, and these—poets of a mystical order. Something like it was quite clearly regarded by Jesus as the normal endowment of the people with whom he had to do. He was constantly occupied in urging them to "look into the life of things" with his own eye, wooing them to this angle of vision, and seeking to awaken in them that "quickenings" of interest in the world and life, which is the first symptom of birth. That this was his engagement with them is plain from the exhortation so frequently given them, that they should "become as little children" and so enter the Kingdom (Mark x, 15). This is in simpler form the same process as that which is more momentarily imaged in "re-birth"; but it makes clearer his idea that it is by a revival or new attainment of a frame and activity of spirit native to man, that men and women are enabled "to see into life" and so recover their birthright.

This identification in the thought of Jesus of mystical insight and the child-spirit (for such it is) is one of the most epochal of all discoveries in the realm of the spirit. But it had been well if versifiers and facile sages had imitated Jesus in his clean simplicity as he spoke of children. In that trumpeted "discovery of the child" with which the nineteenth century is credited, a torrent of sentimentality has risen insufferably upon us, and the object of the quest has afforded full play to those myth-makers of whom the world will never be rid. The last thing in the world to which we can imagine Jesus

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

urging our return, as the qualification of our entering the Kingdom, is the creature compounded of pretty conceits which many to-day would have us believe the Child to be. But there are other interpreters to whom we feel we can turn and recognize that in the child which was significant to Jesus. These are certain poets; for instance, Wordsworth, and those seventeenth century poets to whom I have already alluded. There is Traherne, for example, who says of the direct and intuitive vision that was his in childhood of the "kingdom of heaven" within this world: "These pure and virgin apprehensions I had from the womb, and that divine light wherewith I was born, are the best unto this day, wherein I can see the Universe. By the Gift of God they attended me into the world, and by His special favour I remember them until now. . . .With much ado I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of this world. Which now I unlearn, and become, as it were, a little child again that I may enter into the Kingdom of God." Add to this what Earle in his *Microcosmographie* says of the Child: "Could he put off his body with his little coat, he had got Eternity without a burthen, and exchanged but one heaven for another."

These will be regarded by many as elusive phrases. They cannot fail to be elusive, because they attempt to set before our *thought* a spirit or disposition of spirit which is ampler than thought. But we do well to consider that it is something of this labouring expression of theirs, that lies at the heart of Jesus' estimate of the child-spirit which he declared to be the key of reality. If it be not so, how else can we interpret his appeal to the "child?" In recent times the "child" has been explored by a certain

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHILD

psychology in a fashion that exhibits him as little else than "a nasty little beast." There is nothing of this in the reference of Jesus. Perhaps that was his antique ignorance! Or it may have been his wholesome and natural seclusion from a morbidity of pseudo-science of which even those who are greedy of the obscenely primitive are becoming a little tired. Again, Jesus surely meant more by the "child" than the pedestrian analysis of the traits of childhood to which we are accustomed in the average homily—that a child is "obedient," "dependent," "trustful" and the like. Such pegs for morals do not strike very deep in the mind of Jesus. The fact is, there is no analysis that can do justice to that which Jesus detects in childhood. He himself made no attempt to catalogue its characteristics. He took another course to awaken in the souls of his hearers what he would be at. He did not betake himself to diagrams of its constituents, or seek to dis-petal the flower of it for their better understanding. He was content simply to call the image of the child through their hearts. Once he showed them what a child is, by taking a child and so setting him in their midst (Matt. xviii, 2), that by eye and ear and mind and heart and spirit they might recognize, in one impress, that significance of the child which is bruised and diminished so soon as the effort of analysis begins.¹

It is time, however, that we brought all this back to the point. We have seen cause to believe that, in the judgment of Jesus, the avenue whereby we may enter the Kingdom that already obtains about us, consists in the active revival or re-functioning of a

¹ But see, for a delicate and suggestive analysis, J. W. Marriott's paper, "The Kingdom of the Little Child," *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1911, pp. 717 ff.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

spirit within us which he identified with the spirit of the child. This spirit is something other than thought or emotion or volition in isolation from one another. It is a fusion of these as operates historically in the actual bearing of childhood to reality. It has to be recovered as by a "re-birth." It is in evidence in a remarkable way in certain men and women of a wholesome "mystical" flair of spirit, of whom we have instances in many poets and others, who are recognized by us as possessed of the secrets of life. But theirs is not an unique or rare endowment. It is inherent in all men and only needs attention and care in order to survive the deadening influence of those sophisticated stages of culture in which a unified apprehension of reality is distracted and divided in such isolated activities as "knowing, enjoying, and doing." We have the impression that Jesus sensed it as vitally present in all souls, and as awaiting that simple removal of quite manageable weights and restrictions, whereby it might leap into activity as does a spring when its constriction is released. Its cogency, from various causes, may be diminished, just as the efficacy of "conscience" is recognized as reduced in many breasts; but, as in the latter, so in the former, it is the imperative equipment of all, and, if given play, will lead within the significance of life.

§ 3. *Jesus and "Love" as the law of human nature.*

§§ (1) *Compared with "reason."*

If it is not too late now to hark back to Kant, it may quite reasonably be suggested that this "spirit of the child" might be taken as that in the wisdom of Jesus to which Kant, on his part, gave the title of

"LOVE" AND "REASON"

the categorical imperative. With Kant, it is those who give obedience throughout to "the moral law within," "conscience," the imperative of "practical reason," the dictates of will legislating by reason, who attain their place in his Kingdom, a Kingdom, however, which is not yet in being but only in process of becoming, according as their own fulfilment and that of their fellows are achieved. With Jesus, on the other hand, the Kingdom is already an objective reality; but, further, the instrument within us of its attainment is not will or reason denuded of emotion, but, as we have sufficiently noted, a spirit that operates with all the elements of human nature caught at a point at which it baffles us to separate the activities of will, reason, emotion, and the like. This, with Jesus, is that law of human nature which in Kant's view of it is to be found in the austere court of Reason and its categorical pronouncement. With both sages man is under obligation to obey the law of his own nature. In Kant's view there is indeed room given to emotion of sorts; he calls "respect for the moral law" a feeling, but it is not feeling as usually understood: "Respect for the moral law is a feeling which is produced by an intellectual cause, and this feeling is the only one that we know quite *a priori*, and the necessity of which we can perceive."¹ On the contrary part, it might very well be contended, as we have seen, that the "child-spirit" or "love" or "faith" (however we may attempt its title) in which Jesus detected the law of our being, and which is a fuller movement within us than the operation of "reason," is as surely a "feeling" that we know *a priori*. Kant would dismiss this as untenable. He concedes, it is true, that "it is a very beautiful

¹ *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), p. 166.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

thing to do good to men from love to them, and from sympathetic good will," but he proceeds, "this is not yet the true moral maxim of our conduct which is suitable to our position amongst rational beings as *men*. . . . We stand under a *discipline* of reason." ²

§§ (2) "*Love*" as the law of human nature illustrated in certain notable criticisms of Kant.

Criticism of Kant's position fastens, as we have already noted, upon its rigour and upon its intolerance of the emotional aspects of human nature. It is interesting to observe that certain of those who thus dispute Kant's severity compose their view of what is lacking in him in a way that approaches the kind of attitude to reality and life which we have come to detect as that of Jesus. It is this that Schiller is after in his well-known criticisms of the Kantian morality. He proposes what he calls "free inclination," and this he discerns as the characteristic note of Christianity, that which gives the Christian ethic pre-eminence over Kant's legal morality. In his letter to Goethe of August 17, 1797, he writes, "If we keep to the special characteristic of Christianity . . . it is no other than its abolition of law, of the Kantian imperative, in the place of which Christianity insists on placing free inclination." By this he means the exercise of a motive within us which is not mere impulse, but an imperative which suffuses reason with feeling and feeling with reason, and issues in volition which is thus informed. It is in this direction, too, that James Seth points in his comparison of Christian morality with that of "Greek morality" which is the cradle of Kant's. One real difference,

² *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), p. 175.

"LOVE" IN KANT

he observes, between the two, lies in the "substitution" by Christian morality "of Love and Faith—a volitional and emotional attitude based upon a conviction of the supreme value and validity of Righteousness, purity of purpose, or harmony of the human with the divine Will—for the Greek principle of Wisdom or intellectual insight, as the condition of the best life."¹ In the same direction, further, Croce indicates the need of adjustment in Kant's morality of "cold reason." "If reason," he declares, "is really to vanquish the heart, it must itself be a 'bigger' heart, and therefore capable of experiencing the very feelings it is forced to punish or restrain. These it must integrate and synthesize in a new feeling, a new act of will, and the process is not something cold and mechanical, but partakes of all the warmth and turbulence of life."² Such phrases indicate a just discrimination of what is to be looked for within the spirit of man in his attitude to reality, and it will be agreed that it is not un-akin the bearing we noted in Jesus. The situation may be made clearer by reference to what Pfleiderer has to say of Kant and his exaltation of reason. According to Pfleiderer, "the weak side of Kant's position was that he conceived reason, which he justly regarded as the basis of morality, too abstractedly . . . and therefore thought it necessary to place it in an exclusive antithesis to the emotional side of our nature. Had Kant paid regard to the fact that reason can dwell and ought to dwell in the heart too, that long before it shows itself as the thought of law it stirs in us as impulse and feeling, his morality would have turned out far richer and truer to life . . . and he would have seen that the moral reasonable

¹ James Seth : *Essays in Ethics and Religion*, p. 150.

² Croce : *The Conduct of Life*, p. 98.

disposition of our nature was not a thing ready-made from the first in man, but a thing which had to be developed in history.”¹ This is suggestive. It indicates, for one thing, that reason is an emergence from a totality of address to reality, in which mind, feeling and will constitute an inter-fused movement, and, further, that although subsequently, in the history of the human spirit, reason evinces an activity which can be held apart by the investigator from the other elements in the total spiritual movement, it is at our peril that we attempt to build up a theory of the moral life on that alone.

§§ (3) *Kant's own appreciation of this in his reference to "imagination."*

There is a statement of Kant's which does more than suggest that he was not unaware of this and its implications. It is as follows: "We have to enquire whether imagination combined with consciousness may not be the same thing as memory, wit, power of discrimination, and perhaps even identical with understanding and Reason. Though logic is not capable of deciding whether a fundamental power actually exists; the idea of such a power is the problem involved in a systematic representation of such a multiplicity of powers." ² This utterance has been adopted by the fervent expositor of a philosophical measure entitled "imaginationism," as a flash-light of his system found in a very unexpected quarter. I refer to Douglas Fawcett.³ Fawcett contends that "imagining, Kant's fundamental power," underlies our "free constructive thinking," and, further, he approves

¹ Pfleiderer: *Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. IV, pp. 267 ff.

² Quoted by Kemp Smith, *Commentary*, p. 474.

³ See his Essay in *Contemporary British Philosophy* (Series 2), pp. 85 ff.

KANT'S "IMAGINATION"

when Prof. Ribot says that "it penetrates every part of our life whether individual or collective, speculative or practical—it is everywhere."¹ He calls to his support, as well, Bertrand Russell's admiration of that "direct philosophic vision," which comes to the rescue, on occasion, when the ways of ordinary rational thinking halt and fail;² and he contends that "this 'vision' may convey discovery or creation; reveal existent connexions in the world—imagining or be the place of birth of something new; the point of main interest is that it comes to, and does not originate from, the thinking."

It does not concern us to enquire whether the spiritual attitude of Jesus may be called that of an "imaginist." We are simply engaged in seeing that the contrast, with which we began, between the "practical reason" of Kant and the "child-spirit" or "love" of Jesus, as defining the inherent bearing of the human spirit to life and reality, is not unexceptionably maintained by Kant, and, moreover, that there is a respectable body of philosophical opinion about us, which can be cited in illustration, at least, of the insight revealed by Jesus into the significance and operation of the human spirit in its engagement with nature, mankind, and the ultimate purport of the world.

Let us return to observe with renewed attention that this, as "the child-spirit" or "love," is, in the esteem of Jesus, as native to man and as inherently "imperative" as is that "practical reason" in which Kant found the distinctive nature and ennoblement of man. That it partakes of the nature of an "imperative" within us may be variously seen in

¹ Ribot: *Essay on the Creative Imagination*, p. 332.

² B. Russell: *Our Knowledge of the Eternal World*, p. 241.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the teaching of Jesus. Consider, for example, the so-called commandments, such as those of "non-resistance," which he offers in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v, 21 ff.). To begin with, it need hardly be said that these are not commandments or laws enforced from without on the citizens of his realm. They had only to be exhibited to them to be recognized by them as the motives of behaviour that are involved in their human nature. Jesus quite simply expected his hearers to see this. Nay, further, he as plainly expected that those inimical persons upon whom he urged his followers to practise such "love" as he claimed to be their inherently dutiful attitude to friend and foe alike, would be awakened in their own souls to recognize therein a responsive "love," and to experience a kindred revival of their own native disposition. He called for the exercise of a "love" towards those who smote and defrauded them, which "turned the other cheek" and offered the inner as well as the outer garment, not that they should thereby achieve a subtler and more delightful revenge, but in order that that community of neighbourly life might be restored in which "love" is the normal atmosphere and indigenous relationship.¹

Let me now draw together what we have discerned of that bearing of mind whereby, according to Jesus, we enter into the secret of reality and life, that disposition of spirit that opens the Kingdom to us. It

¹ cf. Chesterton: *Twelve Types*, pp. 72 f.: "Of Francis it is far truer to say that the secret of his success was his profound belief in other people. . . . He always assumed that everyone must be just as anxious about their common relative, the water-rat, as he was. . . . He used to talk to any thieves and robbers about their misfortune in being unable to give rein to their desire for holiness. It was an innocent habit, and doubtless the robbers often 'got round him,' as the phrase goes. Quite as often, however, they discovered that he had 'got round' them, and discovered the other side, the side of secret nobility."

JESUS AND HIS SECRET

is a native disposition of the soul. But with most men it is submerged or over-laid. Accordingly, the Kingdom is concealed for them, although that realm of abiding values is always present to them for the finding. It lurks in all nature, it gleams in men and women of a certain simple and homely type, and, particularly in little children, it is the inner movement of all being. It is revealed to those who bring to bear on it a kindred spirit.¹ This spirit is ampler than thought or the ratiocinative mind. It is a movement of the whole soul of man, in which thought, feeling and will are fused in one address, a multiplied temper which may be called mystical, so long as that is understood to have room in it for the intellectual among the other constituents of man's spirit. It is the exercise of "faith"; or "love"; or that unified disposition which Paul analyses in an impressionist fashion in his exhibition of "the spirit"; or that undifferentiated insight which occupies the "child" in his engagement with nature, man and the gods. The revival of this spirit within us requires attention, concentration, surrender, a rally within us,² a gestation and "labour" of such violence as marks the process of birth. The process is potential in all souls; it is not the rare capacity of souls inspired unusually, as poets or platonic sages, nor does it

¹ For Plato, the attitude of the seeker after truth and the significance of reality, is not a passive or merely receptive attitude: "it is a life, an active process in which the soul realizes what is akin to its own nature." In opposition to this is the view of Bacon, in whom, by his asseveration that reality is open only to those who come to it *sub persona infantis*, "the creative function of the mind which Plato enforces, is ignored or denied."—See Sorley: *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 235. It may be contended that Jesus combines these seemingly opposed attitudes.

² cf. Arnold: *The Youth of Man*—

"Sink, O Youth, in thy soul!
Yearn to the greatness of Nature!
Rally the good in the depths of thyself."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

require a peculiar spiritual genius to recapture it.¹ The Kingdom is open to all.

In spite of such penetrations as we have achieved into the spirit which Jesus inculcated as the porch of the Kingdom, the matter, it may be frankly confessed, remains difficult and vague. And if what we have said of it is in any real sense the burden of the message he set himself to proclaim, it must have appeared elusive enough to his hearers.

Historically, as a matter of fact, his message was an elusive mystery to his countrymen. Although it is clear that he had difficulty in understanding their obtuseness, the great majority met his words very blankly. It is evident that at the outset of his career, Jesus expected a readier response to his revival within the breasts of his countrymen of this "new naturalness." His disappointment increased, until at last he limited his engagement with them to twelve men whom he had chosen out of the world to be with him (John xv, 19). He who began with the hope that his people would stream into the open secret of the Kingdom, even as they flocked in crowds to meet him, came to see that the entrance was "narrow" indeed, and that few there were who found it (Matt. vii, 14). More and more he became conscious of obstacles in the way of his quickening embassy among them, of burdens on the inherent nobility of their souls, of scales upon their eyes which no application of any "new naturalness" could remove. Their souls, he knew, were possessed of a native thirst for heavenly things, and he was able and ready to arouse

¹ cf. *The Man of Genius* by Hermann Türk, the burden of which is that "genius is love." Genius is clairvoyant, intuitive, divining, but it is Love that so equips it and indeed constitutes it. Genius is that seeing which discerns the harmony and beauty of reality. But Love is always there first: "We do not love an object because it is beautiful; it appears to us beautiful because we love it."

HAPPINESS

it and direct it to "living water"; but he found them drunken, and that of which they had so partaken had wrought a defilement of taste and poisoned a virgin appetite. He became fully conscious of the persistence and paralysis of Evil in their hearts, and the blindness that it had wrought therein. "Jesus said, I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh I was seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart and see not."

That saying, found in Egypt, is historically appropriate to that development in Jesus of a missionary's function from that of "teacher" to "Saviour," which Middleton Murry stresses, properly enough, but with an exaggerated emphasis. The temptation is great to pursue this theme of the development of function which either fateful circumstances or faithful choice, or both, effected in the mission of Jesus. But we must resist it meanwhile and return to the course we have set ourselves.

We have seen sufficiently wherein the mind of Kant and that of Jesus are akin, and where they diverge as regards the wisdom of life. The "Kingdoms" which constitute their final categories differ very considerably. That of Jesus has among other varying characteristics a humanistic flavour which we miss in Kant's, a "naturalness" which more readily promises room for all those emotional interests and felicities which Kant's "rationalism" tends to preclude. Nevertheless, in this we must be fair to Kant. As we have seen, he would have men "happy," and he avers that "virtue" is not completed until it is accorded an attendant and proportionate felicity. The "chief good" is virtue, but the "complete

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

good " is the due union of virtue and happiness. But the "complete good," as that union, cannot be realized unless and until man is capable of perfect virtue. Happiness, therefore, of necessity is unattainable in this present sphere of existence. Man is loth to accept this. He continues to dream that happiness should be, and may be, his portion even in this vale of tears, and in spite of a moral struggle from which the rigorists, like Kant, tell him there is no discharge. This postponement of felicity by the Kantians to a problematical future, and the austerity of their Law, denuded of all homely desires and emotions, have been as fuel to that protestantism, not only of the plain man but also of many philosophers, which avows that, as a matter of common experience and of just enquiry as well, Happiness is the true and practicable Moral Standard. To this we now turn, and with all the greater interest, since we have already surmised that Jesus, in his interpretation of human life, has a kinship here as surely as among the legalists.

PART TWO

CHAPTER III

THE MORAL STANDARD AS HAPPINESS

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>Happiness as the normal and proper concern of life</i>	153
(1) <i>Few ethicists are at enmity with Happiness in some form, but not all are Eudæmonists</i>	155
(2) <i>The relation of Happiness and Virtue in Eudæmonism</i>	157
2. <i>Christianity and the ethics of Jesus criticized</i>	
(1) <i>By some as Asceticism</i>	158
(2) <i>By others as a morality of Rewards</i>	160
(a) <i>The Reward of "happiness in heaven." Jesus and "eternal life."</i>	162
(b) <i>The Reward of inclusion in the "apocalyptic kingdom"</i>	165
(c) <i>The Reward of felicity in the present life</i>	167
3. <i>The real nature of Happiness in the view of Jesus</i>	
(1) <i>The distinction of "happiness" and "blessedness" in Jesus and Kant</i>	177
(2) <i>Jesus and "joy"</i>	178
(3) <i>"Blessedness" or "joy" as illustrated in the "child spirit"</i>	179
(4) <i>"Blessedness" or "joy" as illustrated in Jesus' conception of "home"</i>	182
(5) <i>"Blessedness" or "joy" as illustrated in Jesus' conception of "re-birth"</i>	186

CHAPTER III

THE MORAL STANDARD AS HAPPINESS

§ 1. *Happiness as the normal and proper concern of life.*

As the supreme test and regulation of life and its activities, "Happiness" would appear to have the whole horse-sense of mankind behind it. Hedonism and its cognate theories have, in the judgment of the austere, been riddled and disproved times without number; and yet the ruck of men keep harping on Happiness as though the scorn of such philosophers were an idle breath. The philosophers may very well regard the horse-sense of their fellows as asinine in itself and mulish in its persistence!

Nevertheless, the pursuit of Happiness, it may be contended, is the earliest of all moralities, and to-day, taking it all in all, it is the most diffused and prevalent of ethical interests. To the average man there is something downright and entirely obvious in the avowal that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness."¹ Historically this end of life and standard of conduct was, at the first, advanced without more ado as Pleasure. But Pleasure, as the equivalent of Happiness, has retreated.²

¹ Mill: *Utilitarianism*, ch. 2, par. 2.

² Nomenclature here is not altogether easy. The general theory of Happiness has various levels and names attached. As used of sensuous pleasure it is *Hedonism*; of sensuous enjoyment, *Epicureanism*; of satisfaction, *Eudæmonism*; of the satisfaction of an approving conscience, *Euthumism*.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

The identification really slipped through Mill's own fingers so soon as he announced and pursued his claim that pleasures differ, not merely quantitatively, but qualitatively as well. Happiness, as contrasted with Pleasure, is a condition of consciousness that pervades experience, whereas Pleasure is spasmodic. When Mill contrasts "Socrates dissatisfied" with "a pig satisfied," to the inevitable advantage of the former, he has lifted the debate beyond the measure of Pleasure altogether. For one thing, the standard is now fixed in the *personality* of the subject; and, further, the desirable condition is no longer Pleasure, which, after all, is a spasmodic experience, but a "satisfaction" which shares the permanent nature of personality itself. When Mill brought Socrates into the play, he raised a ghost which haunts him uncomfortably and brings confusion on his simple and sunny theory of Pleasure as the end of life. With Mill it is really Happiness that counts; and by Happiness he really means that which satisfies man in his developed personality, a conception which carries the subject into another realm of moral standards altogether.

We do justice, then, to the Eudæmonists when we credit them with Happiness as the ethical end and standard; and we do well to understand by their Happiness, not Pleasure but a pervasively desirable climate and bloom of experience as a whole. "Happiness represents satisfaction with one's existence as a whole—with the past and the future as well as with the immediate present."¹ As such it is a

¹ Rashdall: *Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. II, p. 57. cf. Dewey: *Psychology*, p. 293: "Pleasure is transitory and relative, enduring only while some special activity endures, and having reference only to that activity. Happiness is permanent and universal. It results only when the act is such a one as will satisfy all the interests of the self concerned, or will lead to no conflict, either present or remote."

DEFINITION OF HAPPINESS

generally pleasurable condition, in which are involved, as its constituent elements, a stabilized sense of security amid the changes and accidents of life, joy as an atmosphere, a certain peacefulness, an enduring and almost timeless sense of exaltation,¹ a hopeful bearing towards the uncertainties of the world, and a disposition of tenderness towards our fellows.² This enumeration is not complete; but it indicates sufficiently the kind of state a man looks to who would be happy. It is pleasurable, but it is as a diffusive sunshine over and throughout a man's life. It is never concentrated in any one "pleasure," or in any sequence of "pleasures," however closely these may follow one another. The man who seeks Happiness by "bending to himself" particular joys destroys them as the vehicles of a joy that is fuller than all of them together. Happiness is a poise of spirit as within a perpetual sunrise, by which he addresses himself, with a certain amorous carelessness, to joys as they come his way, and by which he treats with a certain lightness of soul the experiences that men call pain. These are really Blake's phrases; for thus he sings:

"He who bends to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise."

§§ (1) *Few ethicists are at enmity with Happiness in some form, but not all are Eudæmonists.*

Now, it may be said that such an ideal as is this

¹ cf. Wm. James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 47, where the utmost Happiness which "Religion" affords, is described as a time of "happy relaxation, of calm deep breathing, of an eternal present, with no discordant future to be anxious about."

² cf. Wm. James: *ut sup.*, p. 280: "There is an organic affinity between joyousness and tenderness." I have sometimes thought that here is the more hopeful line for the Utilitarians to take in their difficult passage from Egoism to Altruism.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Happiness may very well be the aim and desire of upright and aspiring men! Truly, there are few moralists who would not concur in the reasonableness and even the naturalness of such an accomplishment. The rigorous Kant himself is to be numbered among them. Kant never condemned Happiness as such; nay, he continued to declare that Happiness is our portion and destiny, and that it is Reason itself that so decrees it. He distinguishes "the principle of happiness and that of morality," but he contends, "It does not follow that this distinction is an *opposition* between them, and pure practical reason does not require that we should *renounce* all claim to happiness, but only that the moment duty is in question we should take *no account* of happiness."¹ There is possibly no austerity in this greater than Mill himself would applaud.

Other sponsors for Happiness might quite aptly be found among those who have no name for Eudæmonism. There is Lotze, for example. This man is the contrary of a hedonist; nevertheless he declares that "there is nothing at all in the world, which would have any value until it has produced some pleasure in some being or other capable of enjoyment. Everything antecedent to this is naught but an indifferent kind of fact, to which a value of its own can be ascribed only in an anticipatory way, and with reference to some pleasure that is to originate from it."²

Are these men, then, and the like, among the prophets of Eudæmonism? Hardly. This seeming confraternity has a very shrewd quarrel at the heart of it. The Eudæmonist, in spite of all his

¹ *Kant's Theory of Morals* (Abbott), p. 186.

² Lotze: *Practical Philosophy*, p. 18.

THE RELATION OF HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE

concessions to that heroic frame of mind which scarcely thinks of Happiness when great trials or actions are upon us, or to that refinement of mind which counsels us that Happiness is best sought by those who do not dwell upon it, nevertheless maintains that Happiness is *the* end and standard of life and conduct, both in the realm of ethical theory and in that of the workaday world of practice. In opposition to all who would erect Virtue or Duty, or any such end and norm, as primary, he persists in affirming the ultimate significance of Happiness.¹ It may be putting the point too sharply to say that Virtue is thus only a means to Happiness; but that, after all, is a just enough definition of it. Happiness is both the moral end and the moral standard; the latter involves a judgment on all motives, however idealistic these may be, which determines their validity and worthiness simply on the basis of their resulting or not resulting in Happiness.

§§ (2) *The relation of Happiness and Virtue in Eudæmonism.*

As a matter of mundane fact, it is held, Virtue is an expedient of Happiness. Men are good in order to be happy; they are dutiful towards that end; they practise the virtues as the instruments of felicity. Even the Ascetics, we are told, are so minded, in their devotion to practices which superficially have the appearance of making Happiness impossible for them. Wherever Asceticism is oblivious of a growth in happiness or negligent of it, it becomes a caricature

¹ cf. Sidgwick: *Mind*, No. xiv (1889), p. 487.—“When Virtue and Happiness are hypothetically presented as alternatives, from a universal point of view, I have no doubt that I morally prefer the latter. . . . I should even make a similar choice as regards my own future virtue, supposing it presented as an alternative to results more conducive to the General Happiness.”

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

of life or even a monstrous parody of it. I suppose that Asceticism of this kind has been actually practised ; that is to say, Asceticism which is absorbed in negatives and in denials of all that touches the spirit of man felicitously, to the exclusion of all thought of an ulterior end. It is certainly not easy to conceive of such a mode of human life. And yet this is the kind of accusation that has frequently been brought against the theory and practice of the followers of Jesus, as against a mode of life that is radically the very opposition of that life which seeks to be crowned with Happiness.

§ 2. *Christianity and the ethics of Jesus criticized :*

§§ (1) *By some as Asceticism.*

Certainly there is an ascetic element in the Christian view and way of life. But all wisdoms that have endured among mankind are so affected. The scientific man, and even the artist, must have an ascetic strain in them, if they would reach the "something better" in their quest. A certain economy among the enticements of the world and the distractions of joys which are legitimate enough, must be practised by those who would penetrate to the simplicities in which the roots of truth, beauty, and life lie. It is only thus that the great detectives of life have known the exaltation of discovery ; "simple things," as Thomas Hardy perceived, "onerous to satiate souls, increased their buoyance." Historically, as I indicate, Asceticism is an element in all established wisdoms. In the Greek experience,¹ there was

¹ See the chain of instances given in Essay on "Religion," in *The Legacy of Greece* (Edited by W. R. Livingstone), pp. 47 f. ; cf. also Inge : *Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. II, p. 167 ; and Hatch : *Influence of Greek Ideas*, etc., p. 166.

THE ETHICS OF JESUS AS ASCETIC

an Asceticism that was wholesome; but an invasion from Oriental manners occurred which tended to debase it. This is understood to have had its origin in an eastern despair of life which led to such repressions and mutilations of the normal interests and humanities of life, as to indicate that the elimination of all satisfactions whatever is the proper aim of existence. Something of this came within the Christian way of life, both from the Hellenic contagion, as now noted, and also by other channels. This has so greatly engaged the notice of rather casual observers and critics of Christianity, that they decry the Christian view of life as inherently ascetical and pessimistic. It is thus that Nietzsche condemned it. He "confounded pessimistic with educational asceticism."¹

But we are not really concerned with the ascetical implications of Christianity as that developed or changed with the course of time. Our affair is the mind of Jesus in this matter. As to this, ought we to trouble ourselves with any criticism that attributes to him an ascetical valuation of life in which all that may be suggested by Happiness is renounced? On the contrary, we have already so detected his spirit of humanism and so resolved sufficiently what he intended by self-denial, that we may pass such criticism lightly by. It founders right away on the stone his enemies cast his way, who called him a "a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. xi, 16-19; Luke vii, 31-34). In his teaching about fasting he urged cheerfulness in visage and the anointing of the head as of men who join festally in life (Matt. vi, 17). Neither in his tuition nor in his own practice, was there anything of that

¹ Figgis: *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 141.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

reserve and censoriousness of righteousness which, in refusing to mingle with people, "as we find them," achieves nothing for them and sours the man himself; he mingled freely with all sorts and conditions of men and women, and joined as readily in their customary pleasures (Matt. ix, 10 ff). He declared that if a man gives up anything for the sake of principle, he is in no way the loser; the pearls he surrenders are more than compensated for in the one pearl of great price (Matt. xiii, 46), and the labour and self-denial of the husbandman are made good in the treasure, or in the normal yield, of his furrows (Matt. xiii, 44). And all this proceeds with an attendant happiness, for it is "with joy" that these accomplishments are secured. Even in that instance of ascetical injunction, in which the scholar of Jesus was enjoined to strip himself bare of all he possessed (Matt. xix, 21), the end lay not in that devastation, but in that to which Jesus invited him to proceed—a seemingly straitened career indeed, but one in which the youth recognized his true happiness to lie, since, as we learn, it was with sorrow he declined it and went away. Self-denial has its function to perform in the way of life to which Jesus calls men; but it attaches no virtue whatever to that renunciation of the world which, at the heart of it, regards the world, and life within it, as inherently evil, and without more ado seeks to sterilize and negate them.

§§ (2) *By others as a morality of Rewards.*

I pass from this with assurance when I call attention to the fact that a criticism of the attitude of Jesus to life is fashionable, which takes a line that is quite

THE ETHICS OF JESUS AS EUDÆMONISTIC

contrary to the one just dealt with. So little are certain appraisers of him troubled with any stern asceticism in his view of conduct, that they round upon him for the sheer eudæmonism which, as they believe, vitiates the purity of his morality. Here are the makings of a very pretty quarrel ; but we pass it by with the inevitable observation that there must be something very elusive or, as is just possible, reconciling, in a wisdom of life which elicits such opposite interpretations. Let us rather consider this other criticism within its own bounds. The ethics of Jesus is charged with defacing the purity of moral sanctions by an appeal to the advantages which virtue and dutifulness bring in their train ; it is held to inculcate moral obedience as the ways and means of an ulterior reward or prize. This charge may, and does, assume several forms ; there are three of these. In the first place, Jesus is stated to counsel virtue in order that the happiness of a heaven beyond this vexed and transitory life may be our portion and reward. Again, by those who regard the apocalyptic element as the essential meaning of his mind and message, he is held to have summoned men with almost feverish urgency to make ready their lives in quite unworldly virtues for that volcanic reconstruction of the heavens and earth with which the brooding wrath of God was full to overflowing. Yet again, by those who regard the concern of Jesus in an after-life as secondary, and who have not been stampeded by the apocalyptists, he is simply regarded as counselling a discreet use of moral values and practices, so that his pupils may get along happily from day to day. I propose to engage with each of these three views of the matter in turn.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

§§§ (a) *The Reward of "happiness in heaven."
Jesus and "eternal life."*

In the first place, then, did Jesus hold the reward of heaven beyond the grave as the ground of being virtuous in the present life? Certainly this view of life has been proclaimed in Christian doctrine. It is the view that Donne puts caustically when he describes the man "that had rather have the God of the Old Testament, that payes in this world with milke and honey, than the God of the New Testament that cal's him into his Vineyard in this world, and payes him no wages till the next."¹ But this is not the doctrine of Jesus. It is an error to identify the "wages" or the "joy of your Lord" in certain of the parables with a settlement that is postponed until death; the closed door on which the "foolish virgins" beat in vain (Matt. xxv, 11) is not the *janua mortis* but a *janua vitæ* which opens and closes here and now in the spiritual experiences and fortunes of men and women. More colour can be found for the theory of heaven as the reward of earthly virtue, in the graphic parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi, 19 ff.). But the burden of the story is not really that. It is not implied that men should be virtuous in this life in order to have "comfort" in "Abraham's bosom"; there is no sign that Lazarus was a saint, or that he is commended for so mercenary a practice of saintliness. The story is an exhibition of spiritual facts and necessities, and chiefly this, that if a man allows his soul to be assimilated to the evanescent things of this world, he simply drops out of life, when these and the body he has identified with his soul decay and disappear.

I think we shall leave this matter there. It can be

¹ Donne: *Sermon LXX.*

THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN

quite safely said that with Jesus, as with Nietzsche, "the good shall not be a landmark for me to beyond-earths or paradises."¹ At the same time we must fairly recognize that the thought of the after-life was of living moment to Jesus. Nay, further, he is quite frank about the felicity that attends those who have found their way thither in this present life. Truly, he is portentously reticent about the features and details of that farther realm. If, as we must, we discount such topical imagery as appears in certain of his references to it, like that which we have glanced at in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, we have no description of it beyond certain general characteristics. The most significant allusion is that in which he indicates it as another room in that one Home of an heavenly Father, which includes this present life as one of its many rooms (John xiv, 2).² The connotation of the word "home" is allowed by Jesus to spread itself in our minds and possess our hearts, as the view he would convey to us of heaven beyond this earth. As such, it will certainly be an abode of Happiness; and I feel that Jesus would have less quarrel than have the ethical purists among his critics, with those who dwell with expectation on that joy. He would reprobate, as would most people, those who so dwell upon that radiance and its holy delights that they are blinded to the busy duties that lie to their hands in this present life. But I surmise that Jesus would have applauded Bernard of Cluny for the

¹ Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 41.

² cf. the sweep of Alice Meynell's enlargement of this conception in her poem *Christ in the Universe*. e.g.—

" But in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

fertile service he gave his fellows, and that, likewise, he would have approved of the "unction to the breast" which the great abbot found in "the mention of thy glory, O dear, dear country," for which his eyes "kept vigil."

If this is a defection on the part of Jesus from the sanctions of a commendable morality, it is one that Plato and many others of the paladins of the schools share. With both Jesus and Plato a felicitous after-life is of moment to us and may rightly engage our interest, because they are much more oblivious than most of the cleavage which the majority of men consider to be fixed between this life and the after-life. Plato laboured to convince men that that life of fellowship with the ideal world which, in its fulness, constitutes the felicity of heaven, is a life that is not denied us here, nay, that is open to all who will enter now. It is this continuity that is implied in the image Jesus gives of the connecting rooms in the "Father's house," and still more so in his exposition of "eternal life." To the former I have already referred; and a brief note must suffice, for the present, on the latter.

It is clear that such a phrase as "eternal life" as used by the speakers in the Gospels meant to them life beyond this life, the survival of death. Jesus was content to converse with them on that understanding, as in his talk with him who asked, "What good deed must I do to gain life eternal?" (Matt. xix, 16; Mark x, 17; Luke xviii, 18; cf. Luke x, 25); but in his answer to that enquirer, Jesus gives a turn to the phrase of much significance. He promises the man, that, if he take a certain course in life, he "shall have treasure in heaven." This is an equivalent for "eternal life." But, as we have already seen, he

ĒTĒRĒĀĻ ĻĪFĒ

indicated in this "treasure" a possession which, even in this present life, can be "laid up in heaven" (Matt. vi, 20). In some way, then, "eternal life" is available now. It is this meaning of the phrase that John reports as being openly offered by Jesus. (cf. John v, 39; vi, 54; x, 28 *et al.*). It indicates that a man may here and now be a participator in eternal life, and that this will not be arrested, but amplified and completed, when death has done its worst with him. This, in full measure and with a wonderful emphasis, is that continuity of eternal life which we find in Plato. The conception is, that, even in this world of transient things, we may so give ourselves to those imperishable values that are our inheritance here, as to be assumed in their eternity, and to be made conquerors of change and even death itself. Our life may become "hid with" that world of "ideal forms" which is the inner and only abiding reality about us and within us, so that the ultimate fate of our possessions and even of our body is a matter of indifference; we become "eternal in the midst of time."¹ We shall return to this subject in another connection. Enough has been said to make it clear that the judgment is altogether beside the mark which declares that Jesus bade men be virtuous out of a prudential calculation of Happiness beyond the barrier of death.

§§§ (b) *The Reward of inclusion in the "apocalyptic Kingdom."*

We come now to consider the view that Jesus counselled a certain course of virtue as a prudential

¹ cf. Inge: *Outspoken Essays* (2nd series), p. 33: "Eternal life and survival are not the same; and yet they are related to each other. Eternal life is a quality of ultimate reality; survival is a quantitative measure of duration. Eternal life belongs to the conception of reality as a kingdom of values; survival conceives human existence as a page of history."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

preparation in view of the apocalyptic advent of the "Kingdom of God." But we need not greatly concern ourselves with this. It is really only another form of the criticism with which we have just been occupied. Its only difference lies in an alteration of the geography of the state that is popularly known as "heaven." It places the condition and experience of future reward and felicity in this earth and after a general cataclysm called "the Judgment," instead of in a realm of being in the heavenlies and after the personal cataclysm called death. But in what we have seen, however cursorily meantime, of his conception of "eternal life," we cannot but conclude that if he places the value of man in what so dignifies him here and now that the transition which his death involves is really indifferent, it were quite erroneous to regard the substitution of the general cataclysm of the "Kingdom," described by the apocalyptists, as making any difference. Further, even if we were to agree that, in the mind and outlook of Jesus, the dominant and absorbing thought was that of an overwhelming and imminent appearing of God to judge the world and set up His Kingdom, it would not be just to claim that it was to secure safety and glory in the membership of that Kingdom, in the shape of a future and extrinsic prize, that Jesus called for the practice of virtue in the *interim*. It really begs the question to attribute to Jesus such a view of what membership in the future Kingdom involves. It will not do to say that some popular and contemporary view of the character of the approaching Kingdom, material in magnificence, tribal in extent, and beatific in its quality, was the conception Jesus had of it. There were various strata in the image people had before their fluent minds of the nature of the coming realm of God in the earth.

WORLDLY FELICITY

Some were frankly materialistic ; others graded upwards towards levels of a praiseworthy spirituality. We cannot but believe that a man of the quality of mind of Jesus found the sphere of his thoughts not on those lower, but on those higher levels. What those higher levels were has been indicated by one who has good right to speak. He says, "The essential features of the ordinary conception of the Messiah was that of a *righteous* King ruling over a righteous people ; the Messianic era was indeed one of prosperity, but far more was it one of peace and goodness and the knowledge of God." ¹ Now, if this be the case, and recognized thus by Jesus, and even if it were the case that Jesus preached the Kingdom as the prize of virtue, we can hardly continue to regard his counsel as eudæmonistic ; because if the prize be a spiritual condition described as "peace and goodness and the knowledge of God," how else can we describe the virtue that is said to be the instrument of that promised condition ? In so far as we are enriched with values of permanent worth in this stage of our life, we are already in possession of a treasure, with its attendant joy, which a future experience, whether it be in this world or in another, can only affect by way of enhancement or completion.

§§§ (c) *The Reward of felicity in the present life.*

In the third place, we would engage with those who maintain that Jesus was chiefly concerned with the Happiness of people in the normal current of this mundane life of theirs, and that his interest in virtue lay in such a discreet use of moral values and practices as to bring about that felicity. Now, it is difficult to believe that Jesus thus estimated virtue and dutifulness.

¹ Montefiore : *Synoptic Gospels*, Vol. I, p. xcvi.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Our difficulty emerges in the reflection that we can hardly esteem Jesus as less discerning in spiritual insight than the higher tutors of his own nation. Now these were intolerant of any such view of the subservience of virtue to reward. We are assured that the Pharisees, for example, "were emphatic in teaching that the 'Mitzvah' (i.e. the good or virtuous act) was not to be done for the sake of the reward, as if to obtain thereby some payment of what was due."¹ All the same, when we leave such *a priori* considerations aside—and these are always somewhat insecure—and come to the actual sayings of Jesus about virtue and reward, we may very well be troubled in our debate with those who would have him pronounce virtue to be the vehicle and instrument of Happiness.

Support for this eudæmonistic flavour, as pervading the morality of Jesus, is found in various sayings of his. To begin with, it is detected in the Beatitudes (Matt. v, 3 ff.). But it is surely clear that, in the estimate of Jesus, the "blessedness" which the Beatitudes announce is not a state that is postponed until the virtue (of "poverty of spirit," mercifulness, peacemaking, and the like) has run its course and brought to pass a certain return in *our* experience. The "blessedness" lies primarily in being "poor in spirit," etc. ; it is amplified, as a matter of historical experience, in particular boons that come our way, but it is not suggested that these should be set before us as the end and reward of our behaviour.

Jesus quite evidently and frequently used the term "reward" in his moral charges. But a little discernment will make plain that nowhere has the word a really eudæmonistic significance. Take, for example, his saying, "If you love only those who

¹ Herford : *Pharisaism*, p. 275.

JESUS AND REWARDS

love you, what reward do you get ? ” (Matt. v, 46). On the face of it, this does look like a subservience of virtue to its remuneration. But such a view of it is quite superficial. To such a question as he thus put, the retort is obvious, that they who love those who love them do get a reward, in such things as love in return, good-will, gifts, and divers favours. These, however, are no rewards to those whom Jesus would approve. He urges such to “ love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute them.” It is clear that those who practise such virtues are “ in for a very thin time,” so far as “ rewards ” go !¹ But they do receive a reward, and that is the development of a spirit within them that is identical with the spirit of their “ Father in heaven.” That is to be their aim. And if it be said that, as such, the aim is eudæmonistic, we can only say that that word has now been changed out of recognition ; because we can readily see that, with Jesus, the life of virtue, which is directed to such a reward, is itself a life lived in “ the sonship of your Father in heaven,” that virtue itself is the practice of the “ reward.”² Virtue and reward are for Jesus one transaction, so to speak ; just as practising alms for prestige and the reward of that prestige are one transaction. The reward in both cases is the quittance or “ discharge ” of an engagement which bears one character throughout

¹ cf. Seeley : *Ecce Homo*, p. 159. “ With a view to his ultimate interest a man may fast, may impose painful penances on himself . . . may go two miles with one who has compelled him to go one . . . may turn the left cheek . . . may even *pray* for those that use him spitefully . . . But can a man, with a view to his ultimate interest . . . *love* his enemies ! ”

² cf. Montefiore : *The Synoptic Gospels*, Vol. II, p. 485 : “ The ‘ eudæmonism ’ of the beatitudes is of a special kind. They do not say ‘ Do this, or be this, *because* you will gain a reward,’ or ‘ do not do this *because* you will be punished.’ But they say, ‘ A certain line of action, a certain disposition of mind brings happiness now and hereafter ’ . . . The bliss of virtue, both ‘ now ’ and ‘ hereafter,’ is a continuous state.”

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

its activity, both in the end of it and the means towards that end.¹

It is from this point of view (to take another example) that we find those utterances of Jesus made clear in which he says, "Take care not to practice your charity before men in order to be noticed ; otherwise you get no reward from your Father in heaven. . . . Keep your alms secret ; then your Father who sees what is secret will reward you openly. . . . When you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they like to stand . . . so as to be seen by men. . . . When you pray . . . pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you" (Matt. vi, 1 ff.). Here, again, it is plain, the "reward" is a state of spirit which is the same in constitution as the virtue itself whereby the reward is secured ; it is the consciousness of "sonship in your Father in heaven."

We have now considered typical instances of the sayings of Jesus on which certain base their criticism that his view of virtue was eudæmonistic. It remains to note that there is a whole body of his teaching which weights down the scale of criticism on the other side. As centrally illustrative of this we may take his saying, "You must love your enemies and help them, you must lend to them without expecting any return" (Luke vi, 35). The significance of that is obvious ; and it is actually emphasized by the very fact that Jesus goes on to say of such uncalculating virtue, "Then you will have a rich reward, you will

¹ cf. Milligan : *Here and There among the Papyri*, p. 68 : "When we notice that the word (reward) was at the time the regular technical term for granting a receipt, as witnessed by innumerable papyri and ostraca, we can, with Deissmann, read into the passage in the Sermon on the Mount 'the more pungent ironical meaning, that they sign the receipt of their reward ; their right to receive their reward is realized precisely as if they had already given a receipt for it'."

VIRTUE ITS OWN REWARD

be sons of the Most High." The import of this we have already sufficiently noticed; virtue is its own reward. It is so because both virtue and reward are that one activity and experience which Jesus exhibits in the phrase "sonship in God." In such a relationship reward in the usual sense of the word is devoid of meaning. In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. xx, 1 ff.), reward, as a *quid pro quo*, disappears; the service of God, or the pursuance of high ideals, is in another world from that in which men measure work by the wages they consider due. We need not concern ourselves with many instances of this attitude. But let us delay to mark two of these. The first is the austerity with which Jesus, as in the parable of the rich fool (Luke xii, 13 ff.), regards those who give themselves to that calculation which esteems Happiness, in the shape of wealth and security, as the ultimate aim of life. The burden of that tale is the tragedy of those who, if they would calculate the values of life, calculate so crudely and blindly as not to detect the real values on which to stake themselves. There is an irony in the story, as Jesus tells it, which consorts with that of Plato's philosopher, who, regarding the "rich fools" of his time, "amuses himself with the notion that they cannot count, and thinks that a little arithmetic would have got rid of their senseless vanity."¹

Again, let us take note of what is, indeed, the classical utterance of Jesus in this matter. It is contained in the counsel with which he closed his treatment of his disciples' anxiety about food, drink and clothing: "Seek God's Realm and his goodness, and all that will be yours over and above" (Matt. vi, 33). So Moffatt renders the saying. As such, it deserves

¹ Plato: *Theætetus*, 174.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

particular attention at two points. To begin with, there is here no hint that in any way there is to be a priority in our search; it is not suggested that we must "seek *first* God's Kingdom," as though the other concerns were themselves to be *sought*, albeit in a secondary way. The one inclusive object of the quest is the "Realm of God and his goodness." This puts the situation finally clear as against those who regard the morality of Jesus as eudæmonistic. At the same time, we note, in the second place, that the material interests referred to above, will be "yours over and above"; they will "come in" in due course and measure; a due proportion of such boons is to be looked for in the experience of those whose one real concern is "the Realm of God." Now, this is an offence to the other party; to those, that is, who are of such pure eyes in the sphere of the moral life, as to behold a flaw in any theory of life which insists that material attendances are of real moment to those who would be virtuous. It cannot be denied that Jesus regarded material goods as having a place in the moral life, and as deserving consideration. His ministry of healing and his care, on several occasions, in providing the hungry with bread, are proof of this. Whatever the ethical purists may think of this, commonsense will applaud it as right and appropriate. Anyone with a sense of reality is properly impatient with all theorists who speak as though man could comport himself in duty and virtue as might a disembodied spirit; it is this sense that operated strongly with Jesus here. In this he is at one, up to a point, with such other great humanists as Plato and Aristotle.¹ It is true, as Harnack says, that he esteemed a certain equipment as necessary, and even

¹ See Plato: *Republic*, ii, 361 ff; and Aristotle: *Ethics*, i, 8, 1099a.

JESUS AND MATERIAL WELL-BEING

as the condition, of the moral life. But he put that forward in the sense that such a degree of equipment is necessary if life in any form is to subsist at all. It is this that is denoted in Paul's words, "If we have food and clothes, we must be content with that" (I Tim. vi, 8). It is clear that Jesus regarded Happiness as possible with a degree of equipment which Aristotle would have esteemed as utterly inadequate. Aristotle indicates that it is hardly likely that a good and happy life can begin at all, or be maintained, unless on a material basis which rules out from it the great majority of the sons of men. Jesus, on the other hand, considers that it can begin and can be sustained at any level whereat life itself, that is, in its mere physical maintenance, is possible. This is his more hopeful view for the vulgar mass of mankind. The fact of the matter really is, that the divergence between these sages lies deeper than a question of the degree of goods that is necessary if man is to function in virtue and be happy. The difference lies in this that Jesus was engaged not so much with Happiness as with a condition he called Blessedness. To this we shall come more closely presently. Before we do so, let us continue the observation we made of the relatively insignificant place that Jesus accords to material equipments in the life that is happy. He declared that such equipments will "come in," as an "over and above," to those whose one chief aim is "God's Realm and his goodness." This has a far-fetched sound to many people. But if it were put to the test of actual experience, their suspicion of it might very well be abated. To those who doubt its feasibility it may be suggested that that man might be produced in the court of this test, *if he can be found*, who has in all things given himself up to

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the end Jesus set his pupils, and, as a consequence of his devotion, has gone destitute of the "food and clothes" which the apostle Paul finds sufficient for contentment.

In one passage Jesus appears to amplify this assurance of a necessary equipment for those who obey his counsel. I refer to the saying "Everyone who has left brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands or houses for my name's sake will get a hundred times as much and inherit life eternal" (Matt. xix, 29). *Mark* puts part of the saying thus: "a hundred times as much—in this present world houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and lands, together with persecutions, and in the world to come life eternal" (Mark x, 30). This, however, is not a promise of economic advantages. *Mark* makes that plain. It is a description of that widening of interests and relationships which attends on progress in the "Realm of God." It means that he who adjusts himself to his fellows and general environment with "love," and pursues his intercourse therein with "the spirit of a child," will find entrances given him into the lives and homes of others of so intimately domestic a character, that it may be accurately described as a multiplication by an hundredfold of homes, brothers, mothers, and the like.

Certainly this amplifying of "homes," and the rest, was fulfilled in the experience of those who made the venture of faith of devoting themselves without reserve to the quest of the "Realm of God." It did not always fare with them according to the promise in its unqualified form. Doors were shut in their faces; the family concord they sought in all hearts and at all hearths was sometimes denied them. He bade them expect this; their wonderful new

THE MORAL CASUALNESS OF JESUS

inheritance would be "with persecutions." But his confidence that in their valorous faith and love they would find their "family" amplified in the way he described to them, in phrases that are far simpler in significance than the romantic metaphor they are usually taken to be, was justified in their experience, as we may see from the accounts of the early itineraries of his disciples and of the *poverelli* in all the generations since.

In this debate as to the relationship of Virtue or Dutifulness and Happiness, we have reason to believe, I think, that Jesus sits almost casually to it. That does not mean that either term is of casual concern to him. Nay, Virtue and, no less, Happiness, were lively interests to him, and he has much to say of them. And yet his primary concern, as we have seen, was with something at the back of both, described as seeking and attaining "the Realm of God and his goodness." We have already tried to describe to ourselves in some measure what he signified by that end in life. It is the capture or, rather, recapture of a certain spirit whereby we find ourselves consciously involved, and active, within an ideal world that is not an unrealized, although imminent, dreamland, but the real information of the present world, hidden from us by our own careless or, as it may be, criminal neglect. Let a man come at this spirit and have it operative within him, and his walk and conversation in the world and among his fellows, will assume, as a consequence, the bearing of dutifulness, and the character of virtue, and happiness will be their complexion and climate. It was with this that Jesus was really occupied, so occupied that he engaged with Duty and Happiness, in what I have ventured to call a certain casual fashion. At times,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

accordingly, he has the appearance of laying a grave and stoical emphasis on Duty and Virtue, as though these were the exclusive interests of life as it should be lived ; at other times, he seems to interpret life in terms of " rewards " and the felicity that attends their attainment. It is idle to insist on the irreconcilableness of these attitudes, as does Pigou.¹

The real concern of Jesus had to do with the awakening or re-awakening of a *spirit* in the breast of man of greater importance than all questions of the usual ethical sort. Could he achieve this, he was satisfied to allow duty and virtue to take their own emergent course, and Happiness to appear as the fragrance is allied to its flower. Accordingly, it was without anything like a scientific care in ethics that he spoke of virtue and happiness, and the relation between them. He often used these and other terms in the sense they carried in the minds and mouths of those with whom he was talking. It is merely finical to take him when he so uses the conception of " reward," as though he were choosing a defined ethical category ; and the same is the case with those expressions of his which seem to speak of " duty " as something independent of all " affective tones." He had not, as Pigou suggests, two levels of moral sanction. Jesus was wont to amplify his message of a certain spirit as the secret of life (" love," " child-likeness," " rebirth," etc.), with gestures indicative of popular sanctions. He took the risk that such references involved, because of the confidence he had that the line in life he would have men re-capture and pursue was so truly at the heart of spiritual experience, that, once they detected it and let their life run its way, questions of Duty and Happiness,

¹ Pigou : *The Problem of Theism*, p. 105.

and the relation of these to each other, assumed a secondary importance as natural issues.

§ 3. *The real nature of Happiness in the view of Jesus.*

§§ (1) *The distinction of "happiness" and "blessedness" in Jesus and Kant.*

It is now time that we attended to an aspect of the bearing of Jesus towards Happiness which more than once we left unresolved; and that is the particular nature of the Happiness which he declared would attend the possessors and practisers of the spirit he commended. Let us note, at once, that Jesus never speaks of "happiness," but of "blessedness."¹ It is not right to alternate the word "blessed" in the Beatitudes with "happy."² There is a distinctive quality about "blessedness" which is both wider and narrower than the condition denoted by "happiness." It is wider in the sense of its exalted and enduring character; it is narrower in that it is the attendance of a particular frame of spirit, whereas "happiness" is the form of many possible conditions of consciousness, variously pleasurable.³ Even if we

¹ The term Jesus uses is given us as *μακάριος* a collateral form of *μάκαρ* which in Homer "is strictly an epithet of the gods," and in later use retains something of that high connotation. This is something other than "happiness," the word given us as equivalent to *ευδαίμων* among the Greeks and *felix* among the Romans. Between these and *μάκαρ* there is a difference. A man who is "blessed" may be regarded as "happy"; but "happiness" is not right away a synonym for "blessedness."

² As does King: *The Ethics of Jesus*, p. 216.

³ See E. Caird: *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Vol. II, p. 182: Happiness is "merely 'a general title' under which many particulars could be brought, or an indefinite aggregate of similar parts, which have no essential relations, and which, therefore, form only a quantitative whole at all." cf. Sorley: *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 28: "The content of the notion happiness will differ according as it signifies one or other of these things [realizing or contemplating beautiful things, the pursuit of goodness, the search for and attainment of truth, the gratification of some strong passion, the work-a-day life from which reflection is banished, or the passing from enjoyment to enjoyment], or some combination of them. And a notion which, like this, may mean anything, comes very near to meaning nothing. It becomes a mere form into which any, or almost any, view of the worth of life may be fitted."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

attempt as workable a definition of Happiness as the following, "Happiness is the union and harmony of duty and pleasure in a well-organized life,"¹ we are bound to detect at once a difference here from the flavour that attaches to Jesus' use of the word Blessedness. Kant had in his own way a just appreciation of the difference in significance and nuance between these terms.²

But Kant's distinctions are hardly those that Jesus would draw. Jesus has, as we have frequently noted, his own view of the place of "feeling" in the moral life; and, as for "blessedness," it is not a *post-mundum* estate alone he envisages in that word. But he is akin to Kant in detecting a condition of spiritual felicity that is finer than contentment or happiness, not simply as a more refined form of these conditions, but as possessing a distinctive character and flavour of its own. A man who would attain it would do well to divest his mind of the content which the word "happiness" carried by age-long use and associations, and address himself to what is almost another conception altogether: "he must, as Carlyle put it, close his Byron and open his Goethe. He must seek blessedness rather than happiness."³

§§ (2) *Jesus and "joy."*

There is another term which Jesus uses to denote this felicitous condition. That is the word Joy. Dean Inge avers that "'Joy,' as a moral quality, is a Christian invention, as a study of the usage of *χαρὰ* in Greek will show";⁴ and he proceeds to remark that "even in Augustine's time the temper of the

¹ G. A. Johnston: *An Introduction to Ethics*, p. 182.

² *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), pp. 215, 220 n.

³ Haldane: *The Conduct of Life*, p. 7.

⁴ Inge: *Outspoken Essays* (1st series), p. 226.

JESUS AND JOY

Christians, *serena et non dissolute hilaris*, was one of the things which attracted him to the Church." The Joy that informed Jesus was equable, serene and humanistic ; it burned within him and radiated from him with the even kindliness of sunshine. Bousset finds in this Joy of Jesus his most characteristic quality. It is based on an appreciation of "the present," as the vehicle of an eternal world, in which here and now we may have our walk and conversation. "His joy in the world was real, a genuine outcome of his new type of piety. . . . He desires to communicate this personal piety by personal influence. . . . He lived not in anxious expectation, but in cheerful gladness ; because of the native strength of his piety he brought present and future into one. . . . The present as contrasted with the beyond is for him no mere shadow, but truth and reality ; life is not for him a mere illusion, but is charged with a real and valuable meaning." ¹

The source of his Joy, and the ground of that Blessedness which he himself possessed and transmitted, and which he proclaimed as possible for his disciples, lay in that experience which he described as "entering into the Kingdom of God." We have, I think, gained some insight by now into the significance of that experience ; and if we reflect upon the various descriptive categories whereby his teaching endeavours to exhibit it, we shall gain some further idea of the character and quality of Blessedness or Joy.

§§ (3) "*Blessedness*" or "*joy*" as illustrated in the "*child spirit*."

For example, we found it adumbrated in the

¹ Bousset, as summarized by Schweitzer : *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 243 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

conception of the "child spirit." Now, childhood is happy, not by reason of material comforts or securities (although lollipops have their place!) or of placid contentment (no normal child is so contented), or of ambitious achievement (the normal child is only momentarily concerned with "prizes"), but when he is allowed liberty to engage with the world, and, in particular, the realm of Nature, in his own way. And that is the way of a spirit which finds itself kin to all the constituents of this romantic earth with animistic intimacy; surrenders itself to the impressions with which they address the undifferentiated receptiveness of his five senses; stares and wonders at the momentous, but, at the same time, engages with it in delightful fearfulness; advances with affectionate reverence towards things and creatures that bear themselves as his fellows in the one "dance of life"; broods on the behaviour of animals, trees, streams and waves, as one who would learn the manners of the tribe of which he takes it for granted he, too, is a member; elicits the speech of birds and feels their playful scorn of him, as of wiser beings; catches the quiet stare on the faces of flowers as of creatures that are very patient and wise; goes forth in love to those among the august elders of his own breed who *look* like people who understand, but is baffled by those who have hard eyes that seem to put all things around them into prison; escapes from the oppressive artifices of the grown-ups by actual flight, or by a retirement, in the midst of them, into that hidden realm which Stevenson re-captured in his essay on "Child's Play." Perhaps you ought to read that essay again, with its whimsical analysis of the child's imaginative mind, in order to adjust the description I have given of the child's engagement with nature,

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHILD

men and things. But Stevenson, with all his impishness, is with me in this affair, I am confident ! ¹

We have already kept company with those who have penetrated this "spirit," and returned with a word of it that goes some way at least in making intelligible that intuitive wisdom of the child which, with most of us in after days, becomes an "unheeded dream." It is to this that those who have been wearied and bleached in their spirits by "the light of common-day" look back with yearning. "I think of the sunny days of childhood," writes Wimmer : "then the world was small indeed and life was simple, and I was happy in my restricted sphere." ² "Small," if you will, and "restricted"—although we might quarrel with such terms ; ³ but his "happiness" was indeed that of "sunny days," a radiance which was never held distinct in any way whatever by the child from the experience itself of that domesticity in which he found himself at one, in life and mood, with beasts, and birds, and trees, and those among grown-up humans whose spirit touched his own with understanding. In that very affinity lay "blessedness" ; it was the sense of life's own circulation in the child, a much more intimate attendance upon experience than the word "happiness" can ever express.

Accordingly, whatever men may continue to hope

¹ R. L. Stevenson : "Child's Play" in *Virginibus Puerisque*.

² Wimmer : *My Struggle for Light*, p. 61.

³ These phrases are, I think, a rationalization by an adult—one of the Olympians for whom Kenneth Graham in his *The Golden Age*, has so cheerful a contempt.—"This strange anæmic order of beings was further removed from us than the kindly beasts who shared our natural existence in the sun. . . . To anything but appearances they were blind. . . . Well ! the Olympians are all past and gone. Somehow the sun does not seem to shine so brightly as it used ; the trackless meadows of old time have shrunk and dwindled away to a few poor acres. A saddening doubt, a dull suspicion creeps over me. *Et in Arcadia ego*—certainly I did once inhabit Arcady. Can it be that I also have become an Olympian ?"—pp. 10, 6, 12.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

for in their quest for "happiness," it is idle to think of setting up "blessedness" as in itself a quest. It cannot even be described, any more than the sense of the circulation of the healthy blood within our bodies can be described. It is not an "end." It can only be indicated as the "form" of a condition of life which alone is life. And that estate of life is lost to those who are not "as a little child." The way to it was taught by Jesus; or, we should rather say, it was uttered by Jesus, and exemplified in his own spirit. Each man must, in some way, make the adventure for himself, by some reversion of his soul to the condition of "trust," "faith," "love," in which he once natively comported himself towards reality, and sensed the significance of life.¹

§§ (4) "*Blessedness*" or "*joy*" as illustrated in Jesus' conception of "*home*."

I wrote a little ago of "that domesticity" in which aforetime a man found himself at one in life and mood with the earth and her creatures. This "homeliness" is a note which sounds all through the words which Jesus uses to describe "the Kingdom." And within this category, too, as in that of "the child-spirit," we may savour the "blessedness" which, in his message for life, fills the place that "happiness" holds in ethical enquiries. The impression grew upon us that in the view of Jesus, man has permitted himself to lose touch with a native heritage in this earth, a realm of values to which he has only to open his eyes, and towards which he has only to allow his filial and brotherly heart to go out, to recognize his "sonship

¹ cf.—Coventry Patmore: "Love, and the Child's unheeded dream, is all the light of our day." E. R. Chapman: "The child is, and was, and still shall be, the world's deliverer; in his heart the springs of our salvation rise." Consider also the Child in Mary Lamb's verse, "that would have mocked the sense of pain out of a grievèd soul."

THE BLESSEDNESS OF "HOME"

in God" and his brotherly kinship with all the creatures wherewith the earth labours in love and life. As we saw, the parables of "finding" all indicate this. In *John* (ch. xiv, *et al.*) the true condition of mankind is pictured as Home, not simply an abode beyond the mystery of death, but a "house" with its several "mansions" or "lodges," whereof this present world and our life therein are one.

There is no more fruitful image than this of the experience that goes by the name of Salvation. When we are saved, "something has changed within us. We are different, or at least awakened. . . . We are at home in the universe, and, in principle and in the main, feeble and timid creatures as we are, there is nothing anywhere within the world or without it that can make us afraid.¹ . . . We are saved, if we must have a word, from isolation. . . . Truth, love and beauty come home to us at once as our belongings, and as of one web and tissue with our world."²

Jesus, then, exhibits the realm of man's true life as a home-going; and the blessedness of that state may, therefore, be looked for in the felicity that is characteristic of Home. What, then, is the quality of such felicity, and is there that about it which can be regarded as an "end," separable from the constituents of the home? As to the first of these questions, we shall not find that it is dull or unadventurous, however strange such a claim may seem to many. It is the pathetic delusion of people whom riches have poisoned, and of those in whom the slums and barracks of city life have well-nigh suffocated the wonder of the stars and the homeliness of wild nature, that the home is a stale convenience merely,

¹ cf. *John* xiv, 1.

² Bosanquet: *What Religion is*, pp. 4, 6, 31.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

and that adventures must be sought in flight from it. They do have adventures. It may be called seeing life to rush with weary bluster from place to place, to flaunt ourselves in crowds, to indulge the thrill of great stakes, to take the wings of the evening and fly to the nethermost parts of the earth. Or (for we must be just !) it may be adventure indeed to become a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of political esteem and power, or of commerce, or of letters, or to become an *intrigant* of the world of art, careless of all codes, if only some mood of beauty may be captured and fertilized. But, on the other hand, even on the score of that unrestricted liberty of self-expression which is the chief mark of such sallings afield, the freedom of adventure is larger within the normal home.¹ The felicity of the Home is of a kind that no other spheres of adventuring life attain. And the proof of this may be found in the confessions of those who stand out as the exemplars of the romantic roving in war or exploration or such-like, which catch the eye of the unreflecting as the veritable essence of adventure. With all of these, the delight of their forays is a minor thing compared with the image they carry in their hearts of the day when they shall "get home." It is not too much to say that the fervour and sparkle of their adventures afar would be a poor thing, were it not lighted and warmed by that abiding image.² The biggest things on the field of war, or "beyond the ranges," have been done by men whose hearts were not really filled with the pageantry of their adventures, but who cherished in "the heart's deep core" some Innisfree, the cradle

¹ cf. Chesterton : *What's Wrong with the World* ? p. 57.

² John Buchan tells of a Scottish soldier, who located a place in Mesopotamia as "on the Rothiemurchus side of Kut."

RETURNING "HOME"

of their valiance and the shrine of their return, at the door of which they divested themselves of their trophies, and, entering in, found joy. Their joy lies simply in the fact that they are home again, re-integrated in the focal relationship of life. The man is restored to the native country and climate of his heart ; love at its simplest level and yet in its deepest complexity sets him about and possesses him ; the hands of children direct him ; his dog and the other creatures of ancestral devotion attend him with the worshipful contentment of Eden come again ; familiar trees and flowers embower his spirit in antique peace ; the walls of rooms seem to enfold him with patient benedictions, and an old chair has the look of expectancy as for an exile come to his throne again.

It is in the continuity of that felicitous experience we must look to detect the blessedness which Jesus advertises in those who are of the "kingdom." It is the joy which is theirs who return to the homeliness of the life that is gathered about Nature as about a hearth, that finds in trees and the creatures of earth hedges of a lost garden and old domestic familiars, in all men and women the one kinship, and in poor and outcast people "little ones" for whom we are as responsible as we are for the children of our own begetting. In this sense of simple family identity, and in the recognition and practice of it, blessedness consists. Jesus crowns the metaphor by gathering the whole about a spiritual president in Nature and humanity, whom he calls the God-Father. In Him the world is as the cottage and garden of His tabernacling with the trees of the field, the birds of the air, and man ; and when man "comes to himself" in this final relationship and recognizes and fulfils that

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

domesticity, he knows the blessedness of him who comes home again.

Accordingly, the felicity that Jesus proclaims as "blessedness" is not an "end" such as we can set before ourselves as the pursuit of life. In the last resort it cannot even be described, still less defined, as an attainment or reward, any more than we can exhaust the meaning of the felicity of those who have "come home." It does not lie in the "musick and dancing" (Luke xv, 25 ff.), still less in the mirth of the feast, still less in the wearing of "best robes" and the rest of it, pleasant and worthy as these may be. It lies simply in *being home*, re-awakened or reinstated, as in the case of the "prodigal," within the native and eternal relationships of life, having the status of "sons" even though we may very well confess that it were boon enough to be in no more intimate a place in the heritage than that of "hired servants."

We have now, I think, engaged ourselves sufficiently with the significance of "blessedness" in the message of Jesus. It is the affective suffusion, or felicitous circulation, of life as lived within the Kingdom. This we have tried to elucidate by reference to certain of those categories whereby Jesus indicated that essential quality of spirit which is requisite in those who would enter the Kingdom, or rather which really constitutes the Kingdom as it is "within." I think we might quite readily carry this through others.

§§ (5) "*Blessedness*" or "*joy*" as illustrated in Jesus' conception of "*re-birth*."

A few sentences may be allowed the category of "re-birth." The "blessedness" that attaches to this is obliquely illuminated by the remarkable sentence Jesus uttered about the joy that waits upon physical

BLESSEDNESS AND RE-BIRTH

birth. I refer to these words of his, "When a woman is in labour she is sorry, for her time is come; but when the child is born she remembers her anguish no longer, for joy (*διὰ τὴν χαράν*) that a human being is born into the world" (John xvi, 21). The sentence has its own particular context, of course; but that does not affect the interpretation Jesus puts upon the character of the woman's joy. Her joy, in his detection of it, lies in the achievement that "a human being is born into the world." Is it so? and, if so, what is implied therein? If we may presume to answer for such an experience, we may justly describe her grateful and placid calm as something more than the cessation of pain; there is a quiet and humble pride in it as of one who has fulfilled herself and come abreast of the ultimate laws and purposes of life. She is as one crowned by an accomplishment which discharges her holiest function, and she has thereby fulfilled her affinity with those designs of love and life which are the final currency of reality. Her personality has reached its most intense form, and, at the same time, its ultimate enlargement; her self has come to its most incandescent point, and, at the same time, it is fused with the widest implications of Nature and the spirit that informs Nature. This it is that fills her with a joy that is blessedness indeed. Although she may be the most obscure of her sex, she too is "blessed among women"; in her a divine annunciation has come to pass.

It is only in a broken fashion that we can adjust all this to the spiritual event called "re-birth" and the blessedness that is the bloom of it. The joy that suffuses the event of "re-birth" comes to be even as does that woman's joy. It is not a pleasurable consciousness which we may seek as an end to

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

be sought for its own sake. It is not separable from the achievement ; it is not knowable or even imaginable apart from the experience of the achievement. It is the felicitous glow which is theirs who, in pain at the first, bow themselves in recognition of the truth that they are not their own, but the instruments and co-operators of a world-wide purpose of love and life, in the affinity and fulfilment of which they discover their native function and the discharge of the spacious implications of their personality. With this comes that blessed glow of which we detect more than an image in the joy of her who, with meekness and selfless pride, exemplifies the whole purpose of the universe in the birth of her babe.

We may seem to have travelled a considerable way from the attitude of Jesus to the problem of Happiness and reward. But we have not done amiss. We have seen with what humanism he claims space in life for elements which a rigorous morality or asceticism of the baser sort would banish. And, on the other hand, we have seen his conception of felicity pass upwards to a condition of "blessedness," in which the whole question of "rewards" is dispelled. In this latter connection we have found indications of a view of the moral standard and the moral end which bring these within the thought of personality, and of the fulfilment of man's life as involved in that which gives significance to personality, namely the whole order of being of which he forms a constituent part. In this we make a suitable transition to that conception of the Moral Standard which, in one title familiarly given it, refers to it as "Perfection"; and to this we shall now direct ourselves.

PART TWO

CHAPTER IV

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>Perfection took on a new significance as a result of the triumphant "doctrine of Evolution"</i>	191
(1) <i>The "continuity of all Nature, including man"</i>	192
(2) <i>The result of this on all spiritual views of man's life. Reaction against it.</i>	193
2. <i>The ethical theory of T. H. Green</i>	
(1) <i>Its philosophical background</i>	194
(2) <i>"Self-realization"</i>	195
(3) <i>Jesus and "self-realization"</i>	
(a) <i>His kinship with Green</i>	197
(b) <i>The difference between them</i>	199
(4) <i>Further consideration of Green's conception of the "self"</i>	203
(a) <i>The social content of the "self"</i>	204
(b) <i>The general bearing of the mind of Jesus on the above</i>	207
(5) <i>Green and the method of "self-realization"</i>	208
(6) <i>Jesus and the method of "self-realization"</i>	210
(7) <i>The principle of progress in Morality for Green and Jesus</i>	
(a) <i>Is Morality, as "institutional," static? No, says Green; it develops by "honest reflection" upon its present embodiment</i>	212
(b) <i>The similar effort of Jesus to awaken men to the "spirit" within the institutions</i>	214
(c) <i>But the instrument with Jesus is not "reflection" (which is doctrinaire), but "insight" of a prophetic type</i>	216
(8) <i>Three concluding observations on the relation between Green and Jesus</i>	
(a) <i>The intrinsic quality of man's nature as "mind" and as "love"</i>	219
(b) <i>Green's view that in no man may "self-realization" be entirely evinced.</i>	222
(c) <i>Green's view that "self-realization" is an "idea which does not represent previous experience."</i>	225

CHAPTER IV

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION

§ 1. *Perfection took on a new significance as a result of the triumphant "doctrine of Evolution."*

In the course of the 19th century, all theories of human fulfilment or perfection suffered a sea-change. I refer to the transformation of thought which, beginning in a relatively small field of scientific enquiry, spread almost like wild-fire through all the continents of intellectual and spiritual activity. There is no need to enlarge on this Copernican change, which, while showing signs of its advent in various ways for a long time, came to a penetrating and explosive point in the biological theories of Darwin. The blaze had certainly been smouldering for long, as the theories of Treviranus, Erasmus Darwin, Lamarck and Oken testify. But throughout the second quarter of the 19th century the fire had been banked down ; interest in the surmises of " evolution " had abated ; so that when Charles Darwin flashed upon the world, with Wallace in attendance with his own particular torch in hand, a flame went up before the minds of men as though a volcano had opened beneath an immemorial city.

In this great flare Man could no more escape re-interpretation than did birds and fishes. Hitherto all creatures were regarded in the calm light that issues in the olympian sentence with which Linnæus

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

begins his treatise : " There are just so many species as there were forms created in the beginning." Man was permanently man, just as lion and lizard have ever been the creatures we recognize by these terms. All that science, natural or otherwise, could do was to detect by due analysis his make-up in detail, to appreciate the various constituents of his nature, to show how as a designed creature he " works " or was intended to work, to demonstrate the proper balance within his " parts," in obedience to which he might get the best out of himself, to determine what was primary in him and what was secondary, and to adjust these to one another in the form of organic system which these investigations revealed and experience approved.

§§ (1) *The " continuity of all Nature, including man."*

All this, as we have already noted, was swept into the melting-pot by the new theory of the origin of species. Man went into it with the general mass of living creatures. He was involved, and it seemed as though he would be immersed and submerged, in the genetic continuity that was declared to obtain unexceptionably in the whole range of matter and life ; for " Evolution means that our present-day fauna and flora and their inter-relations have arisen without gaps, though not without leaps, from simpler antecedents which were their entire pre-conditions. . . . The concept includes man." ¹ No such view could prevail without disturbing that traditional complacency which looked on man as a creature apart, or which, while conceding that he has his relationships with the " dust " and the " beasts that perish," proclaimed his tenancy of a " kingdom " apart.

¹ J. Arthur Thomson : *What is Man ?* p. 208.

THE CONTINUITY OF NATURE

And no moralist can now very hopefully remain unaffected by the revelation given us of man's inherent kinship with all living creatures, his derivation from the same "simple antecedents" from which all life is traceable, and his participation, even in his proudest and most cherished capabilities, in the universal process of "development."

This new illumination was lighted in the realm of biology; and its conquest there led men, in the first flush of victory, to seek an adequate description and explanation of spiritual values, as well as of physical facts, in terms of natural or physical conceptions. Moral laws and spiritual ends were either dismissed as the mere efflorescence of fancies which had no relation to reality, or as negligible humours of man's brain; or they were regarded as no more than the refinement of those physical laws which alone are inherent in men and things. Moral laws, at the most, were considered to be simply "the enunciation of the higher laws of biology," and their full significance was to be sought and found at those levels of instinct and impulse whereon man is indistinguishable from the other creatures which earth has thrown forth from one common source.

§§ (2) *The result of this on all spiritual views of man's life. Reaction against it.*

Thus, to begin with, evolutionary biology swept forward with so triumphant a vigour that it seemed as though all distinctiveness were to be stripped from man. Such characteristics of him as reason, soul, spirit, conscience, immortality and the like, were threatened with such an interpretation as would submerge him in the general welter of an all-inclusive struggle for existence. Opposition, of course, was

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

immediately offered, much of it merely obscurantist, but, in other quarters, and in one in particular, of a kind which was ready indeed to bow to the amazing re-interpretation now afforded of biological forms, but which, at the same time, made a valiant effort to show that there is that in man which no pursuit and elucidation of biological development can either explain or affect. I refer to the great demonstration which T. H. Green essayed of the unique spirituality of man, an idealistic *tour de force* which regarded the achievements of the new scientific method with admiration, and was entirely disposed to welcome the idea of development in morality, but which set about safeguarding the intrinsic nature and destiny of man as something which, though embodied in what is continuous with the physical genesis of all things, is nevertheless informed by a spiritual constituency which that continuity does not affect. I propose, therefore, that we should, first of all, consider this attitude of Green's and see, if we can, how it consorts with the wisdom of Jesus. Thereafter, we shall return to the later impact which evolutionary thought has had upon the doctrines of morality.

§ 2. *The ethical theory of T. H. Green.*

§§ (1) *Its philosophical background.*

Green went to the heart of the new problems by exploring the implications of that very instrument by which science proceeds throughout, without which it cannot begin its course, and that is the exercise of knowledge itself. Science is based on the notion of "intellectual progress," that is "a progress towards the attainment of knowledge or true ideas. But we cannot suppose that those relations of facts or objects in consciousness, which constitute any piece

of knowledge of which a man becomes master, first come into being when he attains that knowledge . . . they must exist as part of an eternal universe.”¹ “We must hold then that there is a consciousness for which the relations of fact, that form the object of our gradually attained knowledge, already and externally exist; and that the growing knowledge of the individual is a progress towards this consciousness” (69). Similarly Green seeks to show that man’s practical activity involves the same pre-supposition; “human action is only explicable by the action of an eternal consciousness, which uses them as its organs and reproduces itself through them” (82). Man as knowing, and also as choosing in conduct, could not be such “but for the self-realization or reproduction in him . . . of an eternal consciousness, not existing in time, not an object of experience, but the condition of there being an intelligible experience” (74).

Man, therefore, is a focus in which the Eternal Mind reproduces itself. The reproduction of the Eternal Mind in man is *real* from the very beginning of his knowing and acting as an object to itself. In the field of knowledge and in that of action man can never be a *completed* reproduction of the Divine Mind; but there is a complete “identity between the first stage of intelligent experience and the eternal consciousness reproducing itself in it” (72).

§§ (2) “*Self-realization.*”

As a reproduction at a particular point in time of the Eternal Mind, man’s nature is intrinsically spiritual, being self-conscious and rational. Involved in this

¹ Green: *Prolegomena to Ethics*, par. 69.—Subsequent quotations from his book I shall indicate by appending the paragraph number to the quotation cited.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

are such elements as man shares with all creatures that are physically embodied ; but such appetites, sensations and impulses, are never entirely uninformed by spiritual or rational characteristics. Even in animals the Eternal Mind is operative, but only implicitly, whereas in man it is explicit, or at least, in process of becoming so. It follows, therefore, that man's engagement with himself lies in his bringing to fulfilment the nature with which he has been endowed, in the development of those rational and spiritual capabilities which await explication and growth within him. This moral end is "desirable" and it "satisfies"; that is to say, there is room for pleasure in it. But "pleasure" is not the end; such an aim would be to put last things first. "Our theory," he declares, "has been that the development of morality is founded on the action in man of an idea of true or absolute good, consisting in the full realization of the capabilities of the human soul" (286).

What are these capabilities? "They are not realized in any life that can be observed, in any life that has been or is or (as it would seem) that can be lived by man as we know him; and for this reason we cannot say with any adequacy what the capabilities are.¹ Yet, because the essence of man's spiritual endowment is the consciousness of having it, the idea of his having such capabilities, and of a possible better state of himself consisting in their further realization, is a moving influence in him" (180).

There is much here that cries out for consideration. But we shall pause to do no more meantime than reflect on its fundamental ethical position, and that is, that the end of man's life and the norm of his

¹ cf. Muirhead: *Elements of Ethics*, p. 167: "The highest good is that of the self conceived as a whole, however that in turn may have to be defined."

activity is divined by Green as self-realization. We are concerned to know at the outset whether this conception has any place in the moral tuition of Jesus, and, if so, how it may be generally related to Green's position.

§§ (3) *Jesus and "self-realization."*

§§§ (a) *his kinship with Green.*

That there is some kinship may appear to be readily found. If we combine those several sayings of Jesus which refer to the "winning" of the soul, and that momentous utterance in which he bade his disciples "Be ye perfect" (Matt. v, 48), we at least approach the point of view at which the end of life is regarded as "the full realization of the capacities of the human soul." And incidentally we may note, in his reference to the "heavenly Father," something that is not unakin the ultimate meaning and relation which Green gives to the human soul.

But we dare not suggest such similarities as apposite without looking more closely at the terms used by Jesus. First of all, what exactly did he mean by that counsel of "perfection?" It comes at the end of sayings such as urge a love on our part towards our fellows, and even our "enemies" among them, that emulates the generosity of God's gift of sunshine to "the evil and the good." Does this identify "perfection" with love (Weiss)? Or shall we say that he means by "perfection" simply a certain lavishness of good-will? Or shall we say (with Wellhausen) that the word which *Luke* gives in room of "perfect," namely "pitiful," is the original word? For answer I would say, first of all, that exegetes as reliable as any allow "perfect" to stand; further,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

that if, as we have more than once noted, "love" is to be taken as descriptive of the truth of human life, we are being urged by Jesus to aim at the full attainment of personality. This is in the line of Green's plea. I think that what F. D. Maurice declared of this matter is just and true: "When our Lord says to his disciples 'Be perfect,' he makes it evident by all the rest of his discourse that he meant 'Be men'." ¹

In the next place, what did Jesus mean by the word "soul" and the other terms he used to denote the intrinsic life of man? In the English version, it is *psyche* that is normally translated "soul." In the Revised Version, however, this is modified as "life" (see Matt. xvi, 26; Mark viii, 37; Luke xii, 19 and xxi, 19). But Moffatt returns to "soul." In its lower strata the connotation of the word signifies vital processes; but these are regarded as continuous with that *principle* of life which informs these and which, furthermore, is the unifying order and meaning of man's thoughts, desires and volitions—in a word, of that which affords the substance of personality. So Headlam concludes his investigation of it: "it might be used as our word 'personality'." ²

A cognate word in use in the Gospels is "spirit" (*pneuma*). This is sometimes used as signifying "soul" (*psyche*); it is even used as denoting physical vitality in one place (Luke viii, 55). But its standard connotation is something other and higher than "soul." It denotes an attainment or, in certain instances, a gift, which "might be contrasted with the soul as representing something akin to the divine in antithesis to what was human." ³ Inge goes so

¹ Maurice: Sermons, Vol. II, p. 334.

² Headlam: *Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, p. 121.

³ Headlam: *ut sup.*, p. 122.

FINDING THE SOUL

far as to say that, in the psychology of Jesus, "the soul has to die as Soul in order to live as Spirit."¹ We shall take note of this further on ; for the present let us be satisfied that Jesus takes a view of man's intrinsic life which agrees in outline at least with the conception of self or personality, with its various constituents and capabilities, that engaged the thought of Green.

There is this further kinship, that with Jesus also the aim of life lies somewhere in the fulfilment of that personality, in the true realization of man's self. He urges men to "find" their soul (Matt. xvi, 25), to "win" it by a steadfastness which implies a pulling-together of the man within, and loyalty to that environment in which his ultimate self is constituted (Luke xxi, 19). He declares that there is no "equivalent" for this in the whole wide world (Mark viii, 37).

§§§ (b) *The difference between them.*

It might appear, then, that Green's notion of Self-realization as the moral end may find a lodgment in the ethical views of Jesus. And yet we must not too quickly admit this similarity. The fact is we cannot readily find in the teaching of Jesus the flavour of attention to self, or engagement with self, which the term Self-realization carries with it. I wonder if the term would really have commended itself to Jesus. It has certainly, in other quarters, been subjected to much criticism.²

Jesus speaks of "finding" the Self ; again of "winning" the Self. But the connotation or, at

¹ Inge : *Outspoken Essays* (2nd Series), p. 42.

² cf. Rashdall : *Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. II, p. 65. See that and attendant pages for an enthusiastic criticism in detail of the doctrine of self-realization.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

least, the flavour of these words must be felt to be other than "realizing" the Self. His concern is not with any analysis of the "capacities" of the individual soul, such as might preface the way for guidance in the full or relative development of these. This point may be made clear at once if we reflect that so far from counselling the development of the self in any way of "realization" his counsel takes another direction altogether. He declares that it is they who "lose" their soul who "save" it. The critical utterances are these: "He who has found his soul will lose it, and he who loses his soul for my sake will find it" (Matt. x, 39); "Whoever wants to save his soul will lose it, and whoever loses his soul for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark viii, 35). A word or two must be set down as to the meaning of these terms. By "soul," as we have already noted, is signified "personality." The word "save" implies rescue, keep, maintain, uphold, take charge of, preserve. The word "find" means discover, gain, win, earn. The word "lose" means to lose as one might lose one's life in battle, to lose as one might scatter dust in the wind, or to lose as water vanishes.

The phrasing of these utterances deserves careful attention. On the one hand, that man is presented who "has found his soul" or "wants to save his soul." The picture here is clear. It is that of one whose primary engagement is with *himself*; he has concentrated on his own "capabilities" and made these his first concern; he has defined himself as over against his fellows, and sought so to adjust the world that it shall contribute to his own fulfilment. Such a man, says Jesus, is on the way to "lose" himself. On the other hand, let us note how the

LOSING THE SOUL

contrary fortune is presented in those utterances. The picture is that of a man who "loses" his soul ; but it is not that of a man who having first of all defined to himself the essence and compass of his personality, then proceeds to surrender or sacrifice it, as might a man who, in possession of a treasure, casts it away. There is no calculation based on self ; indeed, self hardly enters into the matter at all. The "losing" is not a policy or, in any way, an expedient for a subsequent gain. The pictures are not those of two men who are equally absorbed at the outset with making the most of themselves, the one of who takes the course of intensive selfishness, while the other elects to pursue the course of selfless-ness, in order to achieve that end. The man described as "losing" his soul *begins* his course with another vision altogether. Confronted with what Jesus describes as "for my sake and the gospel's," his whole interest is absorbed thereby, and interest becomes allegiance and loyalty, the whole process beginning and advancing without any deliberate invasion of it by the thought of self. His salutation of the vision and his surrender to it *involve* a "losing" of himself. But, in so far as his surrender is real, he takes no thought of himself in the movement ; the "losing" of himself is a concomitant of the movement which gives him no concern, of which, indeed, he is probably barely conscious. It might be said that the vision, the "losing" of the soul, and the "finding" or "winning" of it, follow one another in a sequence of consequences ; but, in reality, the whole process is simultaneous—so soon as a man yields himself to the world of the vision, he both "loses" and "finds" himself.

What I am trying to say may be made clear by

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

observing that neither here nor anywhere does Jesus advocate the throwing of self away any way ! His concern is not that men should "lose" themselves in the void, but that they should, with that oblivion of self which is inevitable in the movement, move abroad "for his sake and the gospel's." Now, what do these phrases mean ? "For my sake and the gospel's" means the Kingdom as demonstrably disclosed in the spirit of Jesus. It is to the vision of his own "child-like" community with the pristine heritage in which all men are his co-heirs, that he invites those who engage with him. The realm is here, about us and within us, as objectively as trees and rocks stand in the purview of our eyes ; and man has only to look with that "singleness of eye," of which Jesus gave such descriptions as love, child-likeness, and the others, already explored in our enquiry, to behold it as the native country of his spirit, and to return home to it, and, in so returning, to recognize that this is now the fulfilment of his own soul. But, at the same time, the spectacle of the many, his fellows, who are still oblivious of the felicitous heritage that awaits no more than the opening of their eyes, the woes that blind their eyes with tears, the tyrannies and burdens that so bow their heads that they look not up at all—this calls to him, and, with no thought of self, he engages with it, as might a man fling himself into a battle so chivalrous that no one therein regards his own life as of any moment ; he gives himself as a fountain of sympathy dispersed among them in their sorrows ; he yields himself as seed scattered in the wind upon the ground. So he *loses* himself ; and, "not many days hence," he *finds* himself ; his self-scorning valour saves him alive, and he attains an identification in worth unguessed

before, and even now hardly surmised by himself; his sympathy has returned to him as a well of water springing up within him unto eternal life.

Jesus, as we have seen, intimates that it is his concern that man should "save" his soul, or attain the fulfilment of personality. But that is not to be his primary engagement. First of all, the "Kingdom!" Inasmuch as he recovers his vision of the realm of spiritual worth, which awaits upon his recognition and entry of it in Nature and in all native human relationships, the Kingdom is his, and he comes into his birthright and so to his true and abiding self. With Jesus, man needs only to awake to that world within him and about him, in the eternal simplicities of which he was created and may now and for ever be nourished, to be re-born in the potential fullness of his soul. When this occurs, his innermost being remains in essence as it was; but it is now so reinforced by the free and unrestricted currency of the primordial Spirit that his soul assumes another complexion. It is this, I think, that Inge intends in his abrupt interpretation of the texts we are engaged with, that "the soul has to die as Soul in order to live as Spirit."

§§ (4) *Further consideration of Green's conception of the "self."*

Shall we, then, on the score of that divergence in connection with the general significance of the term Self-realization, cease company with Green in this enquiry? I think not. We must not allow the perpetual recurrence of the term in his book to blind us to the inner content of his moral theory. His choice of that word, and his adherence to it throughout, have obscured for many the real worth and

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

suggestiveness of his ethical adventure. It is quite true that the term Self-realization conveys the impression of that absorption of interest in self and concentration upon its individual development, which are certainly not congenial to the spirit of Jesus. But Green himself would have us take another view than that of the process of the fulfilment of the self. He is greatly concerned to affirm that the self is of a "social" nature, and cannot truly be "realized" apart from its community with other selves. Let us, therefore, in justice to him, recognize his contention in that direction.

§§§ (a) *The social content of the "self."*

"The self," Green declares, "of which a man forecasts the fulfilment, is not an abstract or empty self. It is a self already affected in the most primitive forms of human life by manifold interests, among which are interests in other persons. . . . The man cannot contemplate himself in a better state, or on the way to the best, without contemplating others, not merely as a means to that better state, but as sharing it with him" (199). "The individual's conscience is reason in him as informed by the work of reason without him in the structure and controlling sentiments of society. The basis of that structure, the source of those sentiments, can only be a self-objectifying spirit; a spirit through the action of which beings such as we are, endowed with certain animal susceptibilities and affected by certain natural sympathies, become capable of striving after some betterment or fulfilment of themselves, which they conceive as an absolute good, and in which they include a like bettering or fulfilment of others." (216).

THE SELF AS SOCIAL

Now, there is no small provision for perplexity here. We are conversant enough with Green's proposition that a person possesses his rational, self-conscious nature, through the objectifying within him of the Eternal Mind. But it would now appear that "society" is also such an objectification, and that it is through its influence that the person becomes aware of his endowment. In the last resort, Green must be held to describing each man as the punctuation of an Eternal Mind, in separation, and, it may be held, even in isolation from other like punctuations. It is quite true that the individual's recognition of himself as such a punctuation may be held, or must be held, to be mediated by a "society." But, in the end, his envisaging of a common good, in which alone he can duly "realize" himself, is the result of a process of thought on his part, whereby he concludes that since others besides himself are local endowments on the part of the eternal consciousness, therefore there must be a community of interests between himself and them.

This difficulty in Green has been shrewdly felt by those whose attitude to life is considerably derived from his, and who seek to continue his ethical philosophy. The root of the difficulty is believed to lie in three places. In the first place, in the image we receive from him of the eternal consciousness as a being remotely, or even isolatedly, set apart from man.¹ In the second place, difficulty is created by his characterization of the eternal principle in terms of mind. It is an eternal Consciousness or Mind. This makes it hard to express an intimate connection between it and the emotional aspects of

¹ See Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, p. 262.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

reality, or even its æsthetic aspects. So, too, in the third place, man's personality, as derived from such a principle, is too intellectually conceived ; and, accordingly, his "realization" of himself tends to that stoical achievement in which the humanistic elements of experience are made to subserve the rational to the point of grudging them a really inherent place.

It is not proposed by me that Green would have readily accepted these statements as descriptive of the aim of his theory. But they have been felt even by his disciples to be sufficiently correct to require considerable adjustments of it. Efforts are made, accordingly, to attempt a connotation of the supreme principle which shall make room for other characteristics therein than "mind." And so, as a Spirit involving will, emotion, feeling, "love," "life," besides intellectual activity, it is regarded as permeating the whole range of reality with a pervasive intimacy such as the conception of an Eternal Mind has difficulty in subsuming. So, further, man must not be regarded as so essentially "self-consciousness" that his "animal" properties, and all the homely elements with which his actual environments bind him to earth, are but circumstances in the development of a self which, in its "perfect" state, would be independent of these. His creaturely and institutional environment must not be regarded as simply the medium by which he reaches an awareness of self-consciousness in himself and, by deduction, in others, and the instrument by which he continues to develop that awareness. They are the *content* of his self-consciousness ; the *substance* of his self lies therein ; self is not merely discovered by these, in these it is *found*. We must regard Nature, man's bodily organism, the

JESUS AND THE SOCIAL SELF

family and kindred societies, as a continuum, not simply of the *activity* of the supreme principle, but of the principle itself. The self is constituted by "nature," the family, etc. and can only be "realized" in so far as the man re-identifies himself with these in the form in which they gave reality to himself, and also (but of this we shall take proper notice later) in the form which, by his developing insight, he considers they should further assume.¹

§§§ (b) *The general bearing of the mind of Jesus on the above.*

In this qualification or enlargement of Green's view we approximate the bearing we detected in Jesus a little while ago when we considered the meaning of his word about "losing the soul." That was sufficiently significant in the way of indicating that in the view of Jesus the relationship of individuals one to another and to mother-earth is a primary communion. There is nothing in his tuition which suggests that, until a man has reached some conviction of his embodying the presence and activity of an eternal consciousness, he cannot truly recognize that his self is organically involved in a "society" of selves which emerge at the ends of lines of endowment issuing from the primal spiritual source. That is to say, Jesus nowhere appears to argue that because we are all the "children of God," therefore we must conclude that we are all of one kin, and, accordingly, must bear ourselves to one another in a certain appropriate way. If there is any such argument at all in him, it may be considered to lean the other way; it may be claimed for him that he deduced the reality and significance of the ultimate spiritual

¹ See G. A. Johnston : *Introduction to Ethics*, p. 193.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

principle from the experience we have of the simplest and homeliest intercourse with home, village, and nature, wherein we are nourished in life and spirit from the first, and, accordingly, from a communion with others which is primary. He believed that at the humblest levels of experience and of the simplest reflection thereon, men have that within them which gives them to detect straightway that in "others," in the native community of parent and child, brother and sister, in the creatures and all the vital furnishings of earth, is their natural, real self, and that even in the unreflective practice and fulfilment of their intercourse with these, they are aware in their hearts of communion with God.

§§ (5) *Green and the method of "self-realization."*

But now it is more than time we dealt with the concrete counsel Green has to offer in the methods and practices by which Self-realization may be pursued. In what practical manner may the individual set about "the full realization of the capacities of his soul" or "the fulfilment of his vocation"?

In Green's view, man is possessed of an idea of his having it within him to reach the fulfilment of himself. This idea, as we have already seen, "is a communication in germ or principle of the idea as it is in God" (192); but in man's consciousness it is "indefinite and unfilled," and "within the experience of men it is never fully realized, never acquires a content adequate to its capacity" (352). "Yet, because the essence of man's spiritual endowment is the consciousness of having it, the idea of his having (certain) capabilities, and of a possible better

state of himself consisting in their further realization, is a moving influence in him. It has been the parent of the institutions and usages, of the social judgments and aspirations, through which human life has been so far bettered; through which man has so far realized his capabilities and marked out the path that he has to follow in their further realization. As his true good is or would be their complete realization, so his goodness is proportionate to his habitual responsiveness to the idea of their being such a true good, in the various forms of recognized duty and beneficent work in which that idea has so far taken shape among men" (180).

We may consider, I think, that what Green would be at is this: Man is possessed of an idea (it is in that possession he is distinctively man) which surmounts his mind as a frame of realization. The urge of it within him moves him to experimentations in the concrete of experience, whereby he seeks to embody such surmises of the content of the idea as are given him, and, at the same time, to feel his way to a clearer conception of the frame itself. The ultimate propulsion of this idea lies in its source, namely, the Eternal Mind. If the end of man's life, then, lies, as is contended, in answering the call "Be thyself!" the process is to be pursued, not in remote efforts to snatch some ideality of man from beyond the horizon of human experience, still less some explorative image of the nature of God, with the intention of directly assimilating man's life to the one or the other, but by recognizing that in the laws and customs, institutions and attainments of thought and practice, in which we are called upon to live from day to day, we have the proper scope and the fitting means of realizing our capabilities, and so realizing them that

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

we are on the way to encompass the full content of the idea of perfection.

§§ (6) *Jesus and the method of "self-realization."*

I imagine that what I have written is a not unfair account of Green's exposition, up to that point, of the counsel he offers in respect of the practice of man's fulfilment. We shall now try to indicate what appositeness, or lack of it, there may be between this and the tuition of Jesus ? Jesus, as we have noted, is satisfied to have man fulfilled in the true significance of his soul. How does he consider this is to be brought about ? Does Jesus consider that man, in his movement towards perfection, would do well to take the institutions, etc., in which he finds himself, as the adequate scope of his reflection upon life, and be content to live out his life by living it up to the inner significance his spirit can detect in these ?

At various stages in our enquiry we have prepared an answer to this question. Our answer is that the mind that is in Green here was in palpable measure that of Jesus also. Jesus was so disposed to accept the customary array of the "institutional" life of his age and country, that some can explain him only as a mystic so absorbed in the "inner life" as to take anything else as signifying nothing vital, while others interpret it as an almost contemptuous indifference begotten of his apocalyptic dreams. The facts demand another explanation. The central fact is that Jesus was a good citizen, a patriot, a faithful churchman devoted to the celebrations both great and small of his people's religion, a lover of home, a participator in the domestic festivals of his village and country ; in fine, a man who detected and declared that in the traditional habits and approved manners

JESUS AND SELF-REALIZATION

of his nation the stage was amply and adequately set whereon a man could and should discharge his duty and engage with his destiny. We saw this when we considered his attitude to "the Law" (pp. 159 ff.). It is true that, as we saw (and to this we shall come again presently) he penetrated to the inner significance of the Law and sought to revive in his fellows the insight therein which burned in himself as a white light; but he "came not to destroy the Law" (Matt. v, 17). He honoured the institution of public worship; no one was more dutiful than he in observing the calendar of his People's Church: he was so devoted to the Sabbath that it enraged him to see how egregiously that holy and happy institution had been hung about and encrusted with vetoes that threatened to strangle it. He looked upon those whom he called, as did others, the "poor in spirit," men and women who were content to live out their simple and dutiful days in unpretentious and kindly obedience to the commonplace customs of home, village, and synagogue, and he declared that these are already within the "Kingdom of God" (Matt. v, 3). He was satisfied if men and women but "kept the commands," and these were the humble exhortations, derived from time immemorial, to obey the God of their fathers and to bear themselves with domestic naturalness to their kith and kin. We might increase these references; but enough has been said to indicate that, with Jesus, as with Green, the field of "self-realization" is provided in "the institutions and usages, social judgments and aspirations, through which human life has been so far bettered." There is the same detective and re-vitalizing conservatism in both. The conservatism itself we have now noted; what I

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

mean by those qualifications of it we must now consider.

§§ (7) *The principle of progress in Morality for Green and Jesus:*

§§§ (a) *Is Morality, as "institutional," static? No, says Green; it develops by "honest reflection" upon its present embodiment.*

It may very well be asked whether these two guides are satisfied to regard man's institutional environment at any particular place and time as the set and final opportunity of his development. Do they intend that *all* that that environment includes in the way of established beliefs, customs and practices, must be honoured, loved and obeyed? Does not this entail a static view of the moral life, and, if so, what liberty does it afford in the direction of development? To this another question appends itself. It is this: If, after all, the environment should be fluent enough to permit of a development of its institutional features, by what touchstone can these two guides detect the improvements that are necessary and practicable, and the direction in which they should be pursued? In reality, these two questions amount to very much the same thing; and in so far as we explore the first, as we shall now do, we should make headway with the second as well.

Green's theory has been denounced as resulting in a static view of morality, as indeed have most forms of "perfectionist" ethics.¹ But this kind of criticism has no real reference to Green. In Green's view institutional authority is attained by the operation, first of all, of the Eternal Mind that

¹ See Sturt: *Human Value*, p. 34.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORALITY

inspires mankind to develop socially, and, furthermore, by the gradual filling up on the part of man of the "idea" of perfectibility which animates him. We have seen repeatedly that man is directed in life by "the thought of the full realization of the capacities of the human soul . . . a thought of which the content is never final and complete." This nevertheless, is a thought "which is always by its creative energy further determining its own content" (371). Green tells us that a "growing definiteness" of the "unfulfilled and unrealized, but still operative idea," is to be "gathered from reflection on the actions and institutions in which it has so far manifested itself" (173). Here are we come to that which, in the judgment of Green, is fitted to reveal what is enduring and valuable among the existing embodiments of the creative idea of perfection. It awaits us in the exercise of "reflection." Thereby, further, we attain an angle from which we not only distinguish the kernel from the husk of our present institutional life, but see the line along which change may fruitfully be desired and sought. By "reflection" we shall discern in the "arts and institutions and rules of life, in which the human spirit has so far incompletely realized its idea of possible Best," what is to be distinguished "from the unessential and obstructive"; we shall see how to proceed to clear "the institutions of social life, and the rules of conventional morality" of "alien growths"; and we shall have a fair idea, accordingly, of the next stage of human development. Thus, by "reflection," rational, just and deliberate, we shall escape the two undesirable extremes which Green confesses seem to wait upon the first formulation of the moral end as an idea of perfection slowly taking shape in the institutional life of man, namely, on the

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

one hand, "a dead conformity to the code of customary morality, anywhere and at any time established, without effort to reform or expand it," and, on the other hand, "unlimited licence in departing from it at the prompting of any impulse which the individual may be pleased to consider a higher law" (352).

§§§ (b) *The similar effort of Jesus to awaken men to the "spirit" within the institutions.*

In comparing this with the attitude of Jesus to these themes, I propose to pass over without undue remark the question as to whether his view of what we have been calling man's institutional life is a static view, and, accordingly, as to whether the authority of customs is at all points indifferently an equal authority. In neither case does the mind of Jesus so evince itself. Indeed, from one point of view, his whole mission in life was an endeavour to awaken the souls of men to the "spirit" within the "letter of the law," and an unwearied effort to stir them up to the relative values of all institutions and beliefs. We need not elaborate this. We shall engage rather at the point at which we left Green, and enquire, first of all, as to how Green's view of the indeterminate character of the ultimate institutional life of man consorts with that of Jesus. Here, I think, we shall find that that consummation is equally unresolved and possibly irresolvable in the view of Jesus. He contented himself with the maieutic task of re-quickening within the breast of his fellow-men the activity of that endowment to which Green gives the name of "reflection" or "mere honest reflection," whereby the inner principles of life and its institutional organs may be laid bare and appreciated, and the creative power of them for future developments felt within

THE INSTITUTIONAL SPIRIT

the soul and yielded to. Thus, to take an example, he had no scheme of reform to offer his countrymen in respect of the Church of his fathers, although there was ample room therein for reformation. When he said, "The time is coming when you will be worshipping the Father neither on this mountain nor at Jerusalem. . . . The time is coming, it has come already, when the real worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and reality" (John iv, 21, 23), he was not intimating an ecclesiastical reform, as who should say, The day of all organized religion is past and done with, and now shall religion be without any temples or forms! He was lifting the veil from that without which the holiest rites and shrines are as naught, but which, if present therein, leaves the particularity of various temples and rituals almost a matter of indifference. He himself, after that pronouncement, continued to observe the holy forms of his nation and to honour its mother church. Again, to take an example from the realm of the secular customs of his people, he said, "You have heard the saying, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: but I tell you, you are not to resist an injury" (Matt. v, 38 f.). There is here no countering of a moral custom by the substitution of another. The motive behind the old saying had nothing to do with anything that is vindictive. It was the very reverse in intention; it was intended to limit the degree of requital. It is to the inner significance of this that Jesus penetrated and sought to bring to a point in the hearts of his hearers.

There is no small kinship, then, in the attitudes of Jesus and Green to those movements of the spirit of man with which we have just been engaged. But now we must remark an important dissimilarity.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Quite probably it was suspected by the reader a little way back, when I spoke of the endowment Jesus had, and was solicitous that others should exercise, whereby he penetrated to the inner values of man's institutional life and discerned the track of its future advancement. I referred to it as an endowment to which Green gives the name of "honest reflection." Do I suggest that it was this "reflection" that Jesus himself exercised and would have others likewise practise? No, I reply; and here is the divergent issue to which, as I have just said, we must now give heed.

§§§ (c) *But the instrument with Jesus is not "reflection" (which is doctrinaire), but "insight" of a prophetic type.*

"Reflection" Green calls it, or, again, "mere honest reflection." What is suggested by such a term? Inevitably, I feel, there is suggested the exercise of that intellectual activity which informs man as self-conscious, and which appears to constitute the ultimate reality of the eternal principle in reality. It is this that objectifies itself in man and, as a consequence, man is, in the innermost of his being, a reasoning mind. Accordingly, it is as a thinker he addresses himself by "reflection" to the content of that idea of his perfection which is slowly moving towards definition by its embodiment in the institutions and forms of belief and practice that have become concrete through the inspiration within him of the Eternal Mind. The man of insight, therefore, is the man of discerning thought, the man of intellectual acumen, of philosophical attentiveness, poise, and orderly deliberation.

Now the world can never fully discharge its debt to the men of clarity of thought and intellectual

REFLECTION AND INSIGHT

adroitness, who, like scientists working, as these are understood to work, with no other motive than the pursuit of "the cold, clear star of Truth," resolve and define the logic of man's behaviour in his relations with nature and in his communal engagements with his brethren. But, as a matter of historical fact, it is not by these, but by men of a different, or, at any rate an ampler, spiritual endowment, that the inner significance of man's institutional life is plucked forth, as a vital and pulsating thing, and so exposed to their fellows that these are moved to yield the devotion of their hearts and consciences to it. Nor is it by the former type that there is flashed upon the future, as upon the sky above the next hill that confronts the warring endeavours of the nation towards a fuller life, that vivid and dramatic vision of the further content of "the unfilled and unrealized idea of man's perfectibility." I shall put the contrast sharply, though, as I grant you, somewhat unfairly, by saying that it is not by the *doctrinaires* that these achievements are brought about, but by men of a certain plenitude of spirit, to whom the others play the part of henchmen, clarifying the issues and interpreting them, as might the observers of a battle from an observation-post apart; but the contest itself is otherwise inspired and conducted. It is inspired and conducted by men of the *prophetic* type.

It will hardly be gainsaid that it is the "prophet" who, above all leaders of the sons of men, has most surely and fruitfully revealed to them the significance of their life in the present, and the further and richer embodiment that lies in readiness to encase it, if they will have it so. The prophet is indeed a man of thought, of honest and sustained reflection. He certainly has the discernment which is the philosophical

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

aim of him who would behold things *sub specie æternitatis*. He is "a man who has the power to look at temporal things under eternal points of view, who sees God's rule in all things, who knows, as the incorporate voice of God, how to interpret to his contemporaries the plan of God, and to direct them according to His will."¹ But all this is but one strand in the complexity of his spirit and its functioning. His is indeed the "reflective" mind; but that is informed and active throughout with feeling and will. His thoughts are no sooner conceived than they become gestures; his gestures beat and vibrate with the rhythm of poetry. He "feels all things."² His spirit is one of *insight*, wherein thought, forcefulness, passionate conceptions in the depths of the heart, beauty and the colours and sounds of artistic impulses, are all in-woven with one another, and issue upon nature and humanity with an adequacy that is equivalent to the kindred richness and complexity of nature and humanity.

The power and achievements of men of this type, as revealed in the historical reformations of mankind, indicate where we must look for that engine of discernment in the present life of man, and of its forthcoming advance which Green considers he has secured in "honest reflection." The thing is too big, too riotously alive, too electrical with possibilities, too charged with fateful adventures, and, at the same time, too simply involved in all the primitive loves and hopes and hates of this prolific earth, for "honest reflection" however thoughtful and honest that may be!

I need not remind the reader how we have already detected in the spirit of Jesus that quality and

¹ Cornhill: *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 36.

² *ut sup.*, p. 35.

MIND AND REASON DISTINCTIVE OF MAN

composite character of insight which has just been indicated as the constituency of the prophetic spirit, and which is the desideratum at the most critical point in Green's theory. Jesus came at the life of his age, deciphering its innermost and abiding values and revealing the dominance that was due them in the future, by the exercise, or, rather, the outflow of a spirit within him, which, in its fusion of thought, feeling and will, as of a greater than all prophets and poets, showed in its revived but adult address the secret of communion and identification with reality wherewith the child possesses the "kingdom." But I need not repeat what I have already said in this connection.

§§ (8) *Three concluding observations on the relation between Green and Jesus.*

§§§ (a) *The intrinsic quality of man's nature as "mind" and as "love."*

I desire to make three further observations before we take leave of Green, that great and advantageous philosopher. The first is to indicate still further the contrast between those endowments by the eternal principle which Green and Jesus severally detect in man. In Green's view this is reason as derived from the eternal consciousness, and, as we have seen, it carries with it that flavour of thought and "reflection" which is to be looked for in a particular objectification of a supreme *Mind*. In Jesus something ampler than that is disclosed as the intrinsic quality of man. It is a spirit in which thought, emotion and will operate as one, although it is only by such a re-orientation of man's engagement with nature and humanity as may be called a "re-birth," that this "child-like"

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

disposition comes to function, or, as it may be, re-function within us. By another term Jesus calls it "love." This, as we have seen, is that basis of intercourse with objects, creaturely and human, whereby heart, mind and will are fused in a common engagement with them. When man can so bear himself in communion with the objects of his attention, that the definition of them and their parts which thought effects is pervaded with that emotion of surrender and intercourse which blurs all boundaries, and this interfusion of thought and emotion is forthwith identified with a movement towards them, in which the question as to whether it is submission or conquest is a matter of complete indifference, then is "love" in operation, and the secrets of things are in process of being revealed.

Now, if this spirit is that in the possession and exercise of which man is truly and worthily himself, and if, in the manner of Green, we regard it as an objectifying in him of the divine principle, and if, further, we follow Green's method and argue that from the quality of man's endowment we may envisage the general character of the divine principle, then we may see that a problem which, as we have noticed, puzzles and, it is maintained, baffles Green, is readier for solution, or, at least, for abatement of its difficulty.

The problem in Green which this final term, "love," alleviates is that of the relationship between God and man, between the eternal consciousness and its human individuations. The student of Green is much haunted by this. The divine mind is felt to dwell apart, in that coldness and isolation which we cannot dissociate from the image of brooding and unemotional thought; and man, in all that turmoil

of his being, rational but passionate and surging with feeling, is as in another world altogether, upon which God, in His austere and holy perfection, looks as a remote spectator. This is not the picture Green would be pleased to have us make of it ; but it certainly is the impression with which he leaves us. In one aspect of his philosophical movement the eternal consciousness so fills our attention, that man appears to have only a phantasmal reality ; the individual seems to be none other than a vortex in the processes of the one supreme and only real self-consciousness, which uses men merely for the elaboration or establishment of its own purposes. In the other and more urgent aspect of it, Green's concern is so intimately addressed to man and his struggling but valiant endeavours to achieve the perfectability which he surmises is latent in him, that the initial and continuing connection of God with it all is left very much in the air. This is the final impression Green makes upon us ; but he is not without that other bias as well. He evinces, though unequally, the two biases which Ward detects in the various theories of the relation of the One and the Many : the one bias, which, in those whose primary concern is with the Many, comes to the idea of God as essential to their completion, so that we are led to speak as if He were a means for them ; and the other bias, to which those are subject who attempt to start from the standpoint of the One, and tend to regard the Many as a mere means to the operation of God's perfection.¹

But I must come back to consider whether this gulf that we find in Green between the eternal consciousness and its objectification in man is not on the way, at least, to be bridged by the theory that

¹ See Ward : *The Realm of Ends*, p. 452.

God is "love," and that the relation between this eternal "love," and those in whom it is individuated is one in which both personalities in the union are conserved, however intimately the one is understood to derive from, and to live within, the other. It is by this conception that Ward reaches out to an easement at least, even if he cannot call it a solution, of the problem. "Can we not transcend these one-sided extremes," he asks, "and find some sublimer idea which shall unify them both? We can indeed; and that idea is Love."¹ As to this, however, he says that "here we trench on the mystical, the ineffable, and can only speak in parables." We may be none the worse for doing so! A speaker of parables like Robert Browning has a gift in him, which our mind and heart, responding in unity, salute as true and reliable, whereby he gives us to recognize, in turn, that in God as love man lives out a life which in every fibre of it issues from the creative and sustaining spirit of the eternal, but which in the very act of confessing and obeying that derivation, is strengthened and enlarged in an ever-growing independence.²

§§§ (b) *Green's view that in no man may "self-realization" be entirely evinced.*

I pass, with this, to the second of my three concluding observations on the theory of Green. In speaking in a certain place of that "realization of the capabilities" which man possesses, however latently, in virtue of the "self-objectification" in him of the

¹ Ward: *op. cit.*, pp. 452 f.

² cf. Henry Jones: *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, pp. 190 f. "Browning has given to love a moral significance . . . and he has given it a religious and metaphysical depth of meaning, which, I believe, are without example in any other poet. By means of love, daring to believe the Nazarene teacher . . . he identified the human with the divine, and found in love the atonement of the world."

divine mind, a realization in which alone man can satisfy himself (180), Green goes on to say, "They are not realized, however, in any life that can be observed, in any life that has been, or is, or (as it would seem) that can be lived by man as we know him." Now by this I suppose that Green means that neither in the past nor in the present, and not even in the future, can he be come across, or anticipated, who has fulfilled all that is in the human spirit to accomplish, both in the realm of virtue, and in those of knowledge and art. This may be readily enough admitted. That man is unimaginable, the output of whose spirit includes all that mankind is, and may yet be, capable of, in those fields of spiritual enterprise. But must we say that we shall look everywhere in vain for the incarnation in man, in full and unclouded measure, of that spirit which is couched so closely and so consciously within the eternal spirit, "objectified" in him, as it is in all men, that it has only to utter itself in action and thought and art to attain the achievements to which reference has just been made? The accomplishment of them would, of course, take time, and time is fleeting. Besides, the accomplishment might be limited, of deliberate intent, on this side or on that, by reason of the need of exercising self-economy. But where the accomplishment is actually evinced, might it not be recognized by the discerning among those who are in contact with its exhibitor, as the flowering, in one direction at least, of a soul in which the secret of the eternal principle has been consummated? It is, of course, to Jesus that these groping sentences of mine refer. His attendants did certainly receive the impression that the capabilities of man in the realm of virtue and duty were "realized"

in him. And it has been given to others, if not also to those, to catch in him the breath of a spirit which seemed to have the realm of truth and beauty at his command.

The least that can be said of this is to express disappointment that in the multitude of the philosophical investigators of the wisdom of life, there are so few who pause, before writing such a sentence as that of Green's at present before us, to enquire what difference a fair-minded attention to the place among men of Jesus and his personality might make in their pontifical assertions. "There is no inherent objection to the belief that two thousand years ago the spirit of the ages produced a unique human being."¹ Not all those who are conversant with the movement of the human spirit from its rudimentary beginnings in the uncanny fumbblings of primitive man are misled by the suggestion, which would seem to wait upon certain enquirers almost as an axiom and postulate of their science, that spiritual advancement on the part of the race is a racial advancement, burgeoning from ten thousand hearts that somehow beat as one, and from ten thousand minds that awake from their age-long sleep uttering a common shout of discovery. On the contrary, as has been convincingly said, "progress in higher matters is always due to the minority, to individual thinkers, discoverers, reformers. And there is no known law of the distribution of genius. . . . It would be difficult to prove that it is impossible for a mind of the highest powers to be born of a race in a rude and semi-civilized state."²

¹ Bouquet: *Is Christianity the Final Religion?* p. 67. But see that whole chapter.

² F. B. Jevons: *Introduction to the History of Religion*, pp. 395 f.

§§§ (c) *Green's view that "self-realization" is an "idea which does not represent previous experience."*

I come now to my third concluding observation on the theory of Green. It has to do again with that "idea of himself, as becoming that which he has it in himself to be," whereby man is led, by means of the "arts, laws, institutions and habits of living," which the operation of the "idea" engenders, to realize himself. This, says Green, is "an idea which does not represent previous experience" (352); and it is of this characteristic of it I ask the reader to take note. The "idea" in its full significance is not in our possession. It is a formula which has form and content given to it very slowly and by tentative experimentations in customs and habits of living, on the part of man. Even as a formula it is at first appreciated only in a vague and inchoate fashion. It is a projection of the spirit of man, and, as such, might come under suspicion as a merely subjective expedient of a pragmatical kind, were it not that Green would have us know that in a certain quarter it exists in its completed reality, and that is in the eternal consciousness; "this best state of man is already present to some divine consciousness" (173). In the heavenlies, therefore, there abides in a state of realization that idea of man's perfection whereof man possesses some kind of intuitive awareness, which, almost formless at first, takes on gradually an aspect of definition, as he seeks hither and thither in the concrete of experience to obey its divine pressure within his soul. This, of course, is reminiscent of Plato's realm of "ideas," of which the memory lingers in men at present merged in this world of sense, and to which the impulse of that memory, as it

awakens more and more within them, prompts their laborious return as to the native country of their souls. It is also akin that region of celestial light whence we come at birth, "trailing clouds of glory as we come," to which Wordsworth looked back, with so great a wistfulness, through the intimations of it preserved in childhood. These proclaimers of an upper realm, compared with which our sensible life is as a cave closeted against the sun and the free air of earth's realities, seem to point to a state of being in another place than this tangible world; and, in the end that may be where their theory or vision actually rests. Nevertheless, Plato would have us know that even in this life we may advance far in our recovery of it, and Wordsworth found "seasons of calm weather," here and now, in which we can regain a vision of that which "brought us hither" and the place wherein it dwells, and can "in a moment travel thither!" Green, too, is solicitous about our knowing that man in his slow filling-up of the "unfulfilled and unrealized idea" that "moves him" towards perfection as his birthright and native heritage, is not involved in an enterprise in which he may be attaining, but never does attain, and may never hope so to do. Nay, he declares, "that realization of the powers of the human spirit, which we deem the true end, is not to be thought of as something in a remote distance, towards which we may take steps now, but in which there is no present participation. It is continuously going on, though in varying and progressive degrees of completeness" (376).

Thus the "idea," however it still remain unfulfilled and unrealized, is participated in in its "completeness." Even here we may have our "citizenship in heaven," move and look with eyes that have been delivered

from the shadow of the cave, and live an "eternal life." Now, I need not repeat how radiantly all this is exhibited in the wisdom of Jesus. It was through his tuition that his scholar, Francis Thompson, beheld with amaze those "clay-shuttered doors" of man's insensibility, against which the "drift of pinions beat" in vain, and counselled them "to turn but a stone and start a wing" of the angelic presences that keep, and have ever kept, "their ancient places." Jesus himself appears to have looked through the veil of appearance, not to some perfect realm such as might dawn on a man who gazed through a glass beyond the stars, or to such as a man might detect immeasurably within the horoscope of the future; he found it interfused with all the common things of this sensible and homely world, and he beckoned to man to enter therein as to an immediate citizenship which he ought never to have lost. I would emphasize that last phrase! I cannot rid myself, even if I would, of the impression to which I have already more than once confessed, that Jesus, in the revelation of the real, true, ideal world, which forms the burden of his mission, seems to be summoning men to *recover* their inheritance, and to *renew* a life which was theirs ancestrally, however they may have come to be oblivious of it. Does this imply simply a disposition that is but parallel to Plato's "reminiscence" of a stage of life other than terrestrial, or to Green's thought of man's inchoate idea of himself as present perfectly "in some divine consciousness"? Or is there that in the temper of the spirit of Jesus, as he alludes to this high theme, which seems to indicate his belief in a former stage of man's history, when, not as a mere idea of creaturely perfection in the divine mind, or as a denizen of a heavenly realm whence

he passed to earth in "a dream and a forgetting," man, in this old earth itself, among the trees of its great gardens and in lordly kinship with the beasts of the field, was aware of his sonship towards God in a fashion that somehow came to be widely obliterated among his descendants? But this is a speculation we must not allow ourselves to pursue at this time. I am sure we must return to it; and it may be we shall see that the last word has not been said concerning Green's assurance that the idea of man's perfectability, which haunts and "moves" man, is "an idea which does not represent previous experience."

PART TWO

CHAPTER V

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION (*Contd.*)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>The revolt against the domination of Idealism</i>	231
2. <i>The consequent adjustment of Idealism and its persistence</i>	233
3. <i>The Italian Neo-Idealism : Croce</i>	234
(1) <i>The "zest" of Croce</i>	237
(2) <i>Croce compared in this with Jesus</i>	237
4. <i>We return to consider the impact of "Evolution" on ethical theory</i>	239
(1) <i>Certain forms of "evolutionary ethics" are simply old friends in new clothes, or are theories, long quiescent, which have taken advantage of the confusion wrought by "Evolution" in the spiritual world, to revive in new forms</i>	240
(2) <i>Examples of these two classes above, briefly indicated.</i>	241
5. <i>The New Vitalism</i>	247
(1) <i>Bergson :</i>	
(a) <i>His approach to reality</i>	248
(b) <i>His interpretation of reality</i>	249
(2) <i>Bergson's "Intuition"</i>	250
(a) <i>Its relation to "intellect"</i>	251
(b) <i>Its likeness to Jesus' mode of apprehending reality</i>	252
(c) <i>But these two modes (of Bergson and of Jesus) must not be identified. Their divergence described</i>	254
6. <i>The bearing of Bergson's philosophy on Ethics</i>	256

CHAPTER V

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION (*Contd.*)

§ 1. *The Revolt against the Idealistic Domination.*

Green regarded morality as a progressive and developing engagement of the human spirit ; and in this he was in accord with the evolutionary illumination of thought which ran like wildfire in the latter half of the 19th century. But, as we have seen, his philosophical purpose was to maintain the distinctive nature of human life as not finally reducible to the merely sentient life of the animal world, and to establish man, in his possession of the characteristic of self-consciousness, as a creature apart from the currency of " evolution " in its naturalistic sense.

This effort of Green's, however, was involved in a metaphysic which regarded the universe as the objectification of a Eternal Mind, and man as a particularly valuable and, indeed, distinctive individuation of that supreme Self-consciousness. But Green left us uncertain as to the precise relationship between the Eternal Mind and its embodiment in the individual. It is difficult to avoid the thought that man's struggling endeavour to realize himself, and, indeed, his very personality, are only " appearance " after all, phases of the absolute spirit which only seem to be engaged in a real activity, but are not even movements within the eternal principle itself, since that is perfect, and what is perfect is completed and therefore

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

static. Accordingly, man as in any way a real person, busied in a real development of himself in virtue of a liberty that is really his, tends to fade away within a universe of which the only reality is the supreme Thought that informs it, and of which all its dynamic features are no other than a show of development and attainment.¹

This, that was thus suspected in Green, became a certainty in philosophical interpretation in the theories of his great successors, Bradley and Bosanquet. We shall not delay upon this. In Bradley's dialectic, the Absolute approximates that static perfection which characterizes the Substance of Spinoza. With Bosanquet, the individual is transcended in the Absolute, but as the Absolute is an immutably perfect and completed totality, man, whether he be regarded under the one guise of "a finite-infinite" creature, or under that of a creature whose finitude is somehow overcome, remains consistently a mere semblance of individuality.

These thinkers would not have us regard this abiding and eternally completed unity of the Absolute as static in the sense that it is expressionless. It is ever expressing itself in finite terms, and therefore exists in a continuously new state. But, as it is always identical in its character of infinite totality, it never really changes; and, therefore, even human personality, with whatever "degree of reality" attaches to it, can never be other than a transient

¹ This is the outcome of Green's theoretical presentation. There is, of course, another and more hopeful side, a warmer, or even religious, mood. In his sermon on "Faith" (*Works*, Vol. III, p. 258): "If we are honest with ourselves, we shall admit that something best called faith, a prevailing conviction of our presence to God and his to us, of his gracious mind towards us, working in and with and through us, of our duty to our fellow men as our brethen in him, has been the source of whatever has been best in us and in our deeds."

phase, a mere gleam or bloom on the involving unity of the One Real.

Such estimates of Reality and man's place therein, achieved an amazing dominance in the philosophical world. But the reaction came. A revolt developed, not simply against certain English thinkers, such as Bradley and Bosanquet, but against that whole tendency in thought which derived from Hegel and came to assume an imperial prestige everywhere. The revolt has been a sprawling affair. Great confusion has ensued ; and although much that is fertile has appeared above the tumult, many wooden relics of theories that were long buried and forgotten have been washed free again, and go knocking about hither and thither in currents that swirl all ways. A cynic might very well be disposed to pronounce upon his survey of many of the new and resuscitated theories, the declaration which Donne made about the turmoil of his day : " The Schools have made so many Divisions, and sub-divisions of Ignorance, that there goes as much learning to understand ignorance as knowledge." ¹ Or this, at least, must be said of it, " There is in fact no problem which has ever been debated by philosophy which is not now re-opened." ²

§ 2. *The consequent adjustment of Idealism and its persistence.*

In all this, however, the Idealistic tradition has by no means suffered a complete debacle, though some would have it so. Its ancient empire may be, like Austria, greatly minished or even dismembered, but it still holds a place on the map. Two of its

¹ Donne: Sermon XIX.

² Matthews : *Studies in Christian Philosophy*, p. 75.

principalities may be mentioned. In the first place, that succession which in Bradley and Bosanquet took the course we have already noted, has produced others who would deliver it from the impasse of Absolute Idealism. I refer to such as Edward Caird, Muirhead, Mackenzie, and Henry Jones. Again, in Italy, the movement known as Neo-Idealism, and associated with the name of Croce and Gentile, makes an appreciable stir in the world.

I do not propose to engage with these teachers. And my reason for this lies in the reflection that, in the case of the former group, we should not find much more to concern us in our effort to detect their appositeness, or otherwise, to the wisdom of Jesus, than we have already secured in our sojourn with Green; and, in the latter case, we enter a field of theory which, while spiritualist or idealist in character, pursues a theory of Reality which, strange as it may appear, either brings the problems of ethics within the realm of unreality we find in Bradley, or involves them in that world of unceasing change to which we shall address ourselves when we come to consider those ethical presentations that follow upon a distinctively evolutionary view of nature and man.

§ 3. *The Italian Neo-Idealism : Croce.*

The Idealistic developments in Italy are full of interest. It is even maintained by some that "the important innovations which have been introduced into Idealist theory since the publication of Mr. Bradley's great work have been largely, if not wholly, due to the Neo-Idealist school of Italian philosophers."¹

Reality is spiritual and is in process; its perfection

¹ Joad: *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*, p. 4.

lies not in completion but in a change which is "a perpetual solution and a perpetually renascent problem demanding a new solution." The individual's consciousness is the presence in him of a universal consciousness ("Spirit") which is the basis alike of his individuality and of that of others. In spite of this assurance, Croce has difficulty in establishing the reality of a Mind outside the individual experience. Still, all Reality is Spirit, a Spirit which "does not stay still, but rather is never as the whole in any one of its particularizations, and therefore its true being is just its circular movement which, in its perpetual rotation, produces the perpetual increment of itself upon itself, the ever new history."¹ This is a fluid enough conception; and it is difficult to see how man can maintain therein his permanence at all as a spiritual entity. Indeed Croce is frank enough about this. He will be no party to "detaching the various forms of the Spirit from other forms and transmuting them from categories into things. . . . The differentiations of society and history (and of Nature also) are seen—if we bear the unity of the Spirit in mind—to be approximate and dynamic merely—they are matters of differing stress, not of different quality."² If such values as good and beautiful and true have a prevalent significance, certainly "evil and error" are otherwise; these are "nothing more or less than the transition from one form of reality to another, and from one form of the Spirit to another of its forms—the Spirit, in its effort to attain the higher coming to regard the lower as irrational, erroneous, evil."³ Accordingly, it would appear that the strife and

¹ Quoted in Carr: *The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce*.

² Croce: *The Conduct of Life*, pp. 66, 67.

³ *ut sup.*, p. 62.

longing which characterize the moral life are engaged with "appearance" and not with positive baulks and inversions of the soul. Certainly there is strife enough; "morality," declares Croce, "is born only of struggle, and struggle implies hesitation, wavering, yielding, failure, defeat."¹ The end of the moral struggle is a transcending of personality *beyond* this life. *Within* this life it cannot be represented as an end. We must resign all "solicitude for perfection"; what is "perfect" is dead! And yet within this continuing and seemingly unavailing struggle to which morality calls us, there arrive occasions when we, too, have a sense of having arrived; "in Art and in Thought we escape from the tumult into a haven of refuge and repose, free of the turmoil of life, purified of its poisons, cleansed of its spots and blemishes"²—remarkable achievements, surely, in a world in which all is awheel in the Spirit, which itself "does not stay still," and in which "evil and error" are unreal.

Moral endeavour itself is variously exhibited. On the one hand, we are counselled to leave off dragooning ourselves, as the Kantians would have us do, and to seek to bridge the gulf between our moral ideals and our poor effort to attain them, by "treating ourselves as children, or as invalids . . . sending to the rescue of our faltering sense of duty some re-enforcement from our personal likes or dislikes, now appealing to our pride, now clinging to fond hopes or to illusions which we know to be illusions, but which we keep alive by artificial means, now looking forward to future joys which we think of as rewards and compensations." "As a matter of fact," avows Croce, "our good sense, born of experience, tells us what

¹ Croce: *The Conduct of Life*, p. 160; ² *ut sup.*, p. 127.

to do.”¹ On the other hand, life is presented to us by Croce as a high and perilous sea, in which “great things” are waiting to be done; and these are the accomplishment, not of “cautious souls who never put to sea lest they find it rough and stormy, but by people, as we say, with a ‘sporting instinct,’ by souls of energy and enthusiasm who leave the sheltered haven in the very teeth of the gale.”²

§§ (1) *The “zest” of Croce.*

In spite of the contrariety which anyone can fix upon between such attitudes to practical life, there is an unmistakable zest about it all. And in actual experience the contrariety may very well be resolved in one attitude fairly self-consistent. Certainly the heroic spirits in life, who issue in energy and enthusiasm upon a sea of which the haven is as wide as the horizon, take the events of their voyage, as each day brings these across their bows, with that variety of accommodating devices which, as Croce enumerates them, seem to destroy morality altogether, as might a navigator cast his compass and sextant overboard. Nevertheless, they make a good voyage, now by the guidance of the ancient stars, now by the superstitious practices of sailormen, again by an almost intuitive sense of direction.

§§ (2) *Croce compared in this with Jesus.*

The princely adventurer out of Galilee sometimes gives the impression of being in that galley. At any rate, his *métier* is, as we have seen, rather of this kind than of that which torments itself at every turn with the reference of successive purposes and engagements to the bleak control of a “categorical

¹ Croce: *The Conduct of Life*, p. 143; ² *ut sup.*, p. 25.

imperative," or pauses to measure them against an ideal realization of the various capabilities that constitute the self! But the similitude ends there. Jesus was the greatest of the humanists indeed, kindly to the imperfect theories which men make in their fumbling effort to enshrine the principles of life, tolerant of those who embody their vigorous volitions in what others scorn as superstitious, not greatly concerned if people cling to beliefs and practices which, as contrasted with higher or severer views of truth and goodness, bear the aspect of illusions. Such ways and expedients of life did not evoke in him the cold disapproval and pedagogy of the theorist. If only there were vigour and valorous purpose in those who held and practised them, he took joy of them as would a captain in the field whose men might be armed never so variously, if only they shared his spirit of high adventure, and were in any way set on the achievements which burned in his own heart. But, again, we must not set this man to the rudder of Croce's ship! I need not enumerate the reasons why, or, at any rate, seek to elaborate them. Personality is a very different thing in the wisdom of Jesus and Croce. With the latter, the individual is as those phantasmal shapes that seemed to appear tangibly on the deck of Coleridge's vagrant ship and disappeared into the swirl of the air; with Jesus he is that mariner who, real and precious to the "Spirit" as is a child to his father, drew at first "from out the boundless deep" and, after a voyage in which that filial and paternal commerce is sustained and intensified, "turns again home," as might a man be received as he steps ashore and appears at his father's gate. And, further, the character of the voyage itself differs in the judgments of these two pilots.

With Croce, the voyage is in "that circular rotation," wherein, as we saw, "the true being" of Reality consists. Morality never attains. With Jesus morality at each step stands, in principle, in the article of achievement. With Croce it is difficult to understand how morality could ever attain, even supposing its course were in a forward progression and an indefinite time were given its endeavour. It has no standard of attainment. Neither there nor here is there any "kingdom of God," actual or potential, in which to find a "haven of refuge and repose." Jesus, on the contrary, considered that such a condition of soul could be occupied at all times as the continuing climate of the soul, however greatly divers storms might disturb it from time to time. But Croce can only direct us to "Art and Thought," themselves phenomenal in character, wherein the "yearning we all feel to take our stand somewhere beyond the tumult and look back, pondering, remembering," is "for a passing second realised." "Only for a second?" interjects Croce, and replies, "Of course, because all realization is momentary in instants that quickly pass." ¹

§ 4. *We return to consider the impact of "Evolution" on ethical theory.*

I pass on, however, to observe that while the Idealistic school still maintains itself and remains a very "live option" in philosophical enquiry, the emphasis of attention is certainly in another place nowadays, or, rather, in several other places. It is now taken almost as a commonplace of method that "Evolution" has affected a Copernican change in the whole realm of thought. The field of morals, in

¹ Croce: *The Conduct of Life*, pp. 124, 126.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

particular, can no longer be fenced apart for intensive cultivation, as though the work of ethics were exhausted in pursuing the old rotation of "duty," "happiness," "law," within their ancient boundaries. The prairie has invaded this well-worked field, and its customary crops are assimilated to the wildest of wild grasses. Certainly, when the modern theory of Evolution blazed abroad as a prairie fire (if I may change my metaphors), it was very surely expected that the over-ripe and shrivelled grain of the traditional ethics would be speedily consumed and leave the ground unencumbered for a richer and happier wisdom of life. But such anticipations have not been fulfilled. Indeed, as time has passed since then, the vital effect of Evolution on ethics has been found to be a meagre thing when compared with what was looked for at first.

§§ (1) *Certain forms of "evolutionary ethics" are simply old friends in new clothes, or are theories, long quiescent, which have taken advantage of the confusion wrought by "Evolution" in the spiritual world, to revive in new forms.*

It is true enough that we are confronted with several aggressive schools which profess to get at the heart of ethical problems by means of an unqualified application of evolutionary principles. At the same time, while, as I say, certain of these movements present themselves as the very embodiment of the new illumination, and proclaim themselves as "Evolutionary Ethics," in some of these the evolutionary part of them is found, on examination, to be little else than the infusion of old theories with the new spirit or temper, and in others Evolution is rather loosely attached to them, very much as a robe cast over them to indicate

that they, too, are in the fashion. When idealistic philosophy was roundly attacked in the confusion brought about by the new naturalism, "older modes of thought which had been scotched but not killed," arose in a very abundant virility.¹

§§ (2) *Examples of these two classes of theory briefly indicated.*

It will be profitable to attempt an illustration or two of that concluding statement. In so doing we shall clear the line of our enquiry of much that might unnecessarily detain us, since, otherwise, we should become involved in a whole series of theories that offer themselves as new things under the sun, whereas if, as is asserted by surveyors of the field like Muirhead and Matthews, these, or certain of them, are only old friends with new faces, we may pay less heed to them, and spend our time the better by attending to those which are really engrossed in the explanation that Evolution is understood to offer of Reality and man's moral life. The theories I thus refer to are such as go by the names of Pragmatism, Pluralism, Neo-Realism, and such as have men like Leslie Stephen, Westermarck, Alexander, for their fathers or sponsors.

In my references to these I shall consult brevity, and therein I may be accused of discourtesy, or, what is worse, of deficient appreciation and understanding. This were unjust, at least as regards the former of such possible charges. Certain of the theories enumerated above have brought to me great exhilaration of mind and much nourishment of thought, and I fall behind none in gratitude to them.

¹ See J. H. Muirhead in *Life and Philosophy of Edward Caird*, p. 350. cf. Joad : *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*, p. 86.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

But I have explained why we shall treat them with a seeming casualness.

With such as Stephen and Alexander, the *schema* of the theory is evolutionary ; but in essence it is difficult to distinguish it from Naturalism of the most antique sort. Its only distinction from that lies in its presenting the traditions of conduct as having a certain history, in contrast with the ancient belief that these were oracularly or unchangeably imposed at the first.¹ Stephen's theory, while it advances a form of moral standard, leaves its content indeterminate. Its native temper and disposition are those of Utilitarianism. Certainly Stephen cannot be fitted without more ado into the Utilitarian school, although he accepts happiness as the ultimate end of reasonable conduct. But Sidgwick warns us, as regards Stephen's theory, that "in comparing this with the older utilitarian view, it is important not to exaggerate disagreement."² In Alexander's theory the description and analysis of the way in which ideals operate in society are full of interest and suggestion. But, in the end, they amount to little else than a natural history of their development and adjustments. In essence this thesis "is simply a revival of Hume's doctrine that Morality is nothing but dominant public opinion in combination with the assumption (on evolutionary grounds) that public opinion is always right."³ Akin to these positions, as informing and illuminating us in the natural history of moral ideals, is that of Westermarck, an encyclopædic mind in the field of anthropological study. But, in the end, "his view of ethics is substantially the Moral Sense view of ethics."⁴

¹ cf. Rashdall : *Theory of Good and Evil*, II, p. 412 n.

² Sidgwick : *History of Ethics*, p. 257.

³ Rashdall : *Theory of Good and Evil*, II, p. 412 n ; ⁴ *ut sup.*, p. 413.

NEW ETHICAL FORMS

Pragmatism is not the title of any one theory ; it is a name for a philosophical attitude which may be adopted by various thinkers, the ultimate issue of whose theories may diverge considerably. Muirhead detects in its variety symptoms of "unstable equilibrium," which can be resolved only in one or other of two ways, ways which, it is declared, are actually in process of being pursued by the two inherent tendencies of pragmatistical philosophy : "either, it must advance to a more consistent Idealism, as indeed in some of its best exponents, notably in Professor Dewey, it is always on the point of doing ; or, taking the opposite line of 'radical empiricism,' it must end by accepting the sensation, whether (with Berkeley and Hume) as a psychical event, or (with its realistic opponents) as a physical reaction to stimulus, as the ultimate reality." ¹

Neo-Realism is the most vigorous of those impatient revolts against Absolute Idealism, or any Idealism, which broke up the former dominance of that type of philosophical thought. On the basis of experience it contends, all along the line, against any interpretation of reality which regards it as constituted by mind or as inherently dependent upon mind. The downright commonsense of this attitude has proved, however, in its bearing upon self-consciousness, too drastic for many of its adherents. They hesitate in loyalty to that commonsense to which they primarily appeal against the phantasmagoria of the Idealist, to maintain that we have no knowledge of mind and that the subject in belief or practice is none other than a more or less convenient fancy imposed (somehow) upon the real of experience. The developments of Neo-Realism are moving in directions which remove the

¹ Muirhead : *Life and Philosophy of Edward Caird*, p. 357.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

theory almost irretrievably from its original positions. They have an Idealistic bias, and, in certain modes, have the mark of Pluralism upon them. It may be added that the great testament in which Bertrand Russell displays a banner of belief, as in the very shrine of his heart,¹ reveals a Kantian courage in his maintenance of a realm in which goodness, truth and beauty are real, and the very habitation of his soul, despite the fact that this material world spells out a scornful challenge to it and wheels past his yearning spirit in uncomprehending silence. It were not too presumptuous, I venture to think, to say that in the recognition of his gravitated place beside the troubled and yet triumphant beholder of "the moral law within and the starry heavens above," lies the destiny in thought of this great "captain of his soul."

I am not sure whether I should add to this list the philosophical theory known as *Pluralism*. Like Pragmatism, it assumes divers forms, but it is more cohesive in its differentiations. Its derivation is Leibniz, although it varies distinctively from his theory, in particular as regards his doctrine of "pre-established harmony," whereby he cuts through the difficulty which besets all such theories, as to the inter-action of the myriad "monads" that constitute Reality. We are not concerned with the difficulties that beset it. We may readily see that in the field of morality it follows the general lines of spiritualistic ethics. It certainly declines all recognition of any such "eternal consciousness" as that in Green's theory, whereby individual selves are endowed and set on their course, although certain Pluralists find room for a chief monad, who, while occupying no

¹ B. Russell in his Essay "A Free Man's Worship."

more pervasive a function among the other self-dependent monads than might "the president of a republic," is really intended to play the part of a Supreme Mind. Green, in his turn, is thought by some to isolate the individuality of the supreme Self-consciousness in a fashion that implies a relation between it and the selves of men not altogether removed from the pluralistic presentation. With Green, further, the relation between selves in that community without which self-realization cannot proceed, is not altogether devoid, as we have seen, of the problem that affects the inter-action of the monads. But, leaving these points aside, I think we may say that the ethical content of Green's theory might for all practical purposes be taken over by a Pluralist.

I suppose that many will expect us to come straightway to Herbert Spencer, as the classical instance of the movement which resolved to demonstrate anew the nature and destiny of man in the all-inclusive terms of evolutionary doctrine, and, in particular, to re-interpret his moral life accordingly. I wonder if we must do this. The laborious bulk of Spencer's edification is now regarded by many to be little more effectual in philosophical outcome than was the parturitive mountain. The vast show of evolutionary accompaniment has somewhat faded with the course of time, and the essential contribution Spencer has to make to ethical theory is generally discerned as attachable to schools of a former generation. One critic, by no means unappreciative of the "considerable place" that Spencer must be accorded "in the history of human thought," considers that in the history of philosophy his place is small; and he gives grounds for declaring that "considered as a new and original system of ethics, the *Synthetic Philosophy* is a bubble

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

which has been pricked by the hand of its creator.”¹ Spencer confesses that his ethical conclusions are not fundamentally other than those already current, and offer no guidance for practical life beyond that available by means of “right feelings, enlightened by cultivated intelligence.” The reader may satisfy himself as he chooses as to which of the schools he shall select to attach a theory of conduct defined in the phrases just quoted. As a matter of fact, Spencer’s ethics are tantamount to Utilitarianism. Muirhead defines them with the stricter qualification of “evolutionary hedonism.”² The theory indeed represents another of those reversions to, or re-presentations of, moral wisdom, which, as we have sufficiently noted, came out in new clothes in the 19th century illumination, or, as happened in certain cases, were delivered to the world as new-born creatures who are now making a shift to attire their nakedness in old clothes, or fragments of them.

The large promise of Spencer’s ethical theory was unfulfilled because his view of Evolution was not large enough, or, if its extensiveness is conceded, not deep and inward enough. To him, as to Darwin, the primary principle of Evolution was “the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations,” in other words, the continuing effort of an organism to adjust itself to its environment. The implication here is that the environment is fixed, not

¹ Rashdall: *Theory of Good and Evil*, II, pp. 396 f. In support of that judgment Rashdall quotes Spencer’s own statement in the preface to the last instalment of his *Principles of Ethics*, viz., “The Doctrine of Evolution has not furnished guidance to the extent I had hoped. Most of the conclusions, drawn empirically, are such as right feelings, enlightened by cultivated intelligence, have already sufficed to establish. Beyond certain general sanctions indirectly referred to in verification, there are only here and there, and more especially in the closing chapters, conclusions evolutionary in origin that are additional to, or different from, those which are current.”

² Muirhead: *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 138 f.

THE NEW VITALISM

in actuality at the present stage of the world's development, of course, but really so in a potential or teleological sense. Evolution, on this view of it, is an un-packing, in order to an ultimate re-packing. It images the whole activity of evolution on such mechanical lines as would apply to a huge clock, which, once wound up (although who or what performed the winding is a surd in Spencer's theory) unrolls itself until such a stage of adjustment is reached as would really imply the stopping of the clock. Or we may take Ward's figure of speech and say with him that for Spencer "the universe is like a vast egg which hatches out perfectly by what he was once pleased to call a 'beneficent necessity'." ¹

§ 5. *The New Vitalism.*

Quite another interpretation of Evolution is now in vogue among us. Its point of departure is justified by a scientific display of instances in nature, of growth and variation, which simply cannot be understood as examples of an evolutionary process that proceeds by unpacking or hatching out, or of a process that is explicable by mechanical actions and inter-actions. This display was discerned at the outset and brought to light because of a new movement of address on the part of investigators towards the material of enquiry. It was one that brought a spirit of immersive imagination to bear upon the surge of life, and savoured its significance by means of an appetite in which thought and feeling, scientific reason and emotion, logic and imagination, were all inter-active in one engagement. Spencer had considered that a survey of the actions of all animate creatures showed that "quantity of life, measured in breadth as well

¹ Ward: *Realm of Ends*, p. 113.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

as in length " is the end to which they are devoted in the effort to attain complete adjustment. This is the observation of one who *observes* them. But, as Muirhead submits, " it may be questioned whether, besides these two dimensions of life . . . there is not a third, viz., depth." ¹ It is within the depth of life that men would now pass, and this it is sought to achieve by that imaginative immersion of spirit which I have tried to indicate. Such an immersion, we are assured, has revealed a quality in the evolutionary process to which no mechanical view of it is in any way adequate. Life is creative in nature. The whole thing teems with initiative.²

§§ (1) *Bergson.*

§§§ (a) *His approach to reality.*

This attitude will be readily identified with the bearing of Bergson to the concerns of science and philosophy. It is by some such activity of spirit as I have ventured to describe as imaginative immersion that Bergson does more than survey the " breadth and length " of life, but explores its " depth " as well, and issues with his well-known discoveries. The spiritual movement which this instrument for detecting the real is, is denoted by his chief disciple in this country as " an act of the mind which turns the mind from its own natural bent, turns aside from ready-framed concepts to place itself in the real activity out of which the conceptional habit has been formed." ³ It is thus that we are properly aware of our own bodily life, and it is by an extension

¹ Muirhead: *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 138 f.

² cf. Wildon Carr: *The Philosophy of Change*, p. 5: " Wherever there is life there is something incalculable and unforeseeable, something new and unpredictable, continuously happening."

³ Wildon Carr: *ut sup.*, p. 3.

of that exercise of awareness that we may enter within the significance of reality at large. We cannot of course, as in the case of the object "ourselves," actually live the life of all reality, but we can enter into it by *sympathy*—make ourselves one with it in order to know its movement. We must "instal ourselves" therein, by which is meant disregarding all intellectual views of it in order to concentrate our attention on the actual movement itself.¹

§§§ (b) *His interpretation of reality.*

By this method, we are told, the revelation comes home to us that we ourselves and the reality in which our life flows, are a stream of continual "change" or "becoming," a surge of Life which is the behaviour of an *élan vital*, a life-force, whose behaviour, however, is itself. And what is the history of this one ceaselessly changing and creating Life, or, rather, what is its behaviour, since Bergson refuses as illegitimate such questions as would probe its origin or destiny?—these are enquiries that belong to metaphysic which has gone astray along the line of perception.² Bergson gives us two dramatic pictures of it. The first is in the image of a wave; the other is drawn from the festivity of fireworks! "From our point of view," he says, "life appears in its entirety as an immense wave, which, starting from a centre, spreads outwards, and which on almost the whole of its circumference is stopped and converted into oscillation; at one single point the obstacle has

¹ Wildon Carr: *The Philosophy of Change*, pp. 32, 35 f.

² The Vitalists consider that the metaphysicians, such as Spinoza and Leibniz, although possessed occasionally of that truer method which Bergson revealed, do no more than "present to us a systemization of the new physics, constructed on the model of the ancient metaphysics." See Bergson: *Creative Evolution*, p. 367.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

been forced, the impulsion has passed freely. It is this freedom that the human form registers. Everywhere but in man, consciousness has had to come to a stand ; in man alone has it kept on its way."¹ Again, in picturing the process just described, he says, "I simply express this probable similitude when I speak of a centre from which worlds shoot out like rockets in a fire-works display, provided, however, that I do not present this centre as a *thing*, but as a continuity of shooting out. God, thus defined, has nothing of the already made ; he is unceasing life, action, freedom."² All this, of course, is directly scornful of all Absolutes and of the Gods of deists of all sorts.

§§ (2) Bergson's "Intuition."

It need not concern us to try to play the part of judge upon this theory of Reality, by appraising its many and profound difficulties, in particular, the obscure problem of the "inversion" of the outflow of the *élan vital* whereby Matter exists.³ But it will be found worth while for us to delay for a little on the mode by which Bergson has, as already noted, described a true and direct apprehension of reality. I made bold to call it an imaginative immersion of our spirits in the surge and depth of life. Bergson calls it "intuition," and this he describes as "instinct aware of itself," a "sympathy" which, as we have seen, instals itself in the immediate processes of life, and which, if it could be maintained in continuous operation by us, would give us to possess (not to *know*, but to *possess*) the secret of Reality : "If," says Bergson,

¹ Bergson : *Creative Evolution*, p. 280.

² Bergson : *op. cit.*, p. 262.

³ Bergson's exhibition of this sticky part of his theory may be found conveniently at page 263 of his *Creative Evolution*. And the difficulty of it is suitably indicated in Matthews, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 f.

BERGSON'S INTUITION

"it could be prolonged beyond a few instants, it would not only make the philosopher agree with his own thought, but also all philosophies with one another. Such as it is, fugitive and incomplete, it is, in each system, what is worth more than the system, and survives it. The object of philosophy would be reached if this intuition could be sustained, generalized, and, above all, assured of external points of reference, in order not to go astray."¹ I cannot understand that closing sentence, or at least its talk of "external points of reference." This has no meaning unless understood of some engagement in the intuitive act by "intellect," because, in Bergson's own theory, "points" are the work and concern of intellect.

§§§ (a) *Its relation to "intellect."*

Nevertheless Bergson will allow no profit of commerce between intuition and intellect in the real apprehension of the world. Intuition, as we have seen, is "a power of grasping by direct apprehension the reality of the universe as it is in itself before it undergoes the shaping and forming and framing and moulding which the intellect imposes upon it in order to fit it to serve the practical activity of our lives."² In Bergson's own words we are told that "the distinct outlines which we see in an object, and which give it its individuality are only the design of a certain kind of influence that we might exert on a certain point of space."³ Intuition and intellect, therefore, are two divergent and unassortable approaches to Reality; but it is by intuition we get there; "the intellect is unfitted to comprehend life."

¹ Bergson : *op. cit.*, p. 252.

² Wildon Carr : *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³ Bergson : *op. cit.*, p. 12.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

§§§ (b) *Its likeness to Jesus' mode of apprehending reality.*

The difficulty I feel about those "external points of reference" which Bergson would fain secure in the flow of Life still remains. But, setting that aside meantime, I desire to say that there is much in what Bergson and his disciples make of intuition as the real and positive avenue to the significance of Reality, that is refreshingly suggestive. I venture to think that we savour something here that came our way as we tried to explore the spirit that animated Jesus and the quality and design of his engagement with the world and life. You will remember how we detected in him that creative type of spirit which is that of the "poet," and how we were led to consider that it is not only men who chant lyrics, but very sober philosophers as well, who, in the primary address of their spirit, confront nature with a certain synthesis of soul, a vision of the field of their interest which is not that of the map-maker, but of one on whose whole imaginative spirit the prospect flashes in a Pischah-sight, and who, if they are philosophers, proceed thereafter to define and array the vision for purposes of a communication to others which poets have readier means of accomplishing, and yet must keep on returning to the vision, from time to time, in order to refresh them in their pedestrian task. We came nigh the detection that in such a "poet" as Jesus, the vision was amazingly sustained throughout the particularization of his message among men. With most men, the "hour of insight" is brief and infrequent, and the "hours of gloom" are many in which the truth or tasks "willed in hours of insight" may be fulfilled. In the case of Jesus the hour of insight appears to have possessed an "eternal"

JESUS AND INTUITION

quality, as the continuous climate of his spirit. At least I think I may say this, that in him I discern something very like the vital attitude to reality which Bergson labours to define by Intuition. I would not propose to identify them; they are really at variance on certain irreducible particulars. But I consider that Jesus possessed the kind of intuitive communion with nature and man after which Bergson staggers under the incompetence of words, in spite of his lyrical endowment of utterance. In some remarkable degree Jesus was delivered from the need of breaking off the visionary flight, in the brief course of which philosophers, no less assuredly than poets, see their subject "whole," in order to make the vision practicable to themselves and communicable to others. He seems to have had that power of retaining the intuitive "pitch," in the partial and periodic loss of which Bergson sees the cause of the failure that dogs the systematic philosopher. "There is no durable (philosophical) system," says Bergson, "that is not, at least in some of its parts, vivified by intuition. Dialectic is necessary to put intuition to the proof, necessary also in order that intuition should break itself up into concepts and so be propagated to other men; but all it does, often enough, is to develop the result of that intuition which transcends it. . . . The philosopher is obliged to abandon intuition, once he has received from it the impetus, and to rely on himself to carry on the movement by pushing the concepts one after another. But he soon feels he has lost foothold; he must come into touch with intuition again" ¹

We have had occasion at various stages of the present enquiry to attempt an exploration of that

¹ Bergson : *op. cit.*, p. 251.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

disposition whereby Jesus would have us recognize our domestic affinity with the spirit that informs all reality, and so enter "the Kingdom." It were not altogether illegitimate to find a cognate mood in the description our Vitalists give of Intuition. In this connection there is something that is strangely apposite in these phrases of Wildon Carr's: "Intuition is instinct, sympathy, an apprehension of reality from within. It is the artist's insight. It is the lover's devotion, the mother's sacrifice."¹ And here is a phrase from Bergson which approaches that conception we discerned in the wisdom of Jesus, of a disposition towards life which is not to be regarded merely as the instrument whereby we invade life's secret, but is in itself and in the exercise of it life itself: "These fleeting intuitions," says Bergson, "which light up their object only at distant intervals, philosophy ought to seize, first to sustain them, then to expand them, and so unite them together. The more it advances in this work, the more will it perceive that intuition is mind itself, and, in a certain sense, life itself."²

§§§ (c) *But these two modes (of Bergson and of Jesus) must not be identified. Their divergence described.*

We must not, however, push such identifications too far. As I hinted above, there are differences between these two attitudes. And the difference lies chiefly in this, that we cannot consort with the spiritual engagement with reality, which we detect in the mind of Jesus, that cleavage between intuition and intellect upon which Bergson and the others

¹ Carr: *op. cit.*, p. 163.

² Bergson: *op. cit.*, p. 282.

BERGSON AND JESUS CONTRASTED

are so categorically insistent. The original impulse of life, according to Bergson, held within it both intuition and intellect, and has developed them both, but unequally. Intuition, or the instinct which lies at the fount of it, is nothing like degraded intelligence, nor is intelligence anything in the nature of uplifted instinct. They are two modes of spiritual activity, "opposed to one another in every respect, so that it is impossible to conceive the one to be derived from the other."¹ Now, this is at enmity with what we saw in Jesus of apprehensive contact with reality. We considered that we found in his own spirit, and as the primary element in his teaching, an address of the soul in which thought, feeling and will are fused in one explorative movement. There is certainly no suggestion in Jesus of that aggrieved attitude to intellect which, as in Bergson, regards it in the light of a necessary nuisance that retards, arrests and breaks up, the flowing communion with reality which intuition (feeling and volition) is prepared to complete, if uninterruptedly sustained. Strangely enough, Wildon Carr in the midst of those sentences of his upon which I drew a little ago, intimates that intuition and intellect, "are complementary, but not identical." What this complementariness can really mean I am at a loss to know. The two spiritual movements would appear to be complementary in the way in which the two ends of a see-saw are complementary. So, at any rate, their action in practical life must be imaged. If by complementary is meant simply that they have a common origin in "the original impulse of life," we may very well ask, if it is not conceivable that the human spirit, in its apprehending invasion of reality, might re-attain

¹ See Wildon Carr : *op. cit.*, p. 164.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

that point of vantage which somehow obtained in "the original impulse of being," before the divergence of intuition and intellect from one another developed. That would be a point at which thought, feeling and volition evince themselves in one coalescence. It is the kind of attainment we have savoured in the spirit of Jesus. Bergson seems to regard some such attainment as possible, or, at least, conceivable. He says that "a complete and perfect humanity would be that in which these two forms of conscious activity should attain their full development."¹ In terms of his radical principle this would seem to be quite an impossible "completion" and "perfection." But if it ever does come true, we have already seen enough of a certain sage and of the unveiled spirit of communion with nature and life that informed him, to know where hopefully to look to find it.

§ 6. *The bearing of Bergson's philosophy on Ethics.*

It is time, however, to move on and discover, if we can, what ethical implications obtain in the vitalist theory, and where, as it may be, the wisdom for life of Jesus stands with regard to them. Bergson himself has for long stood aloof from the field of ethics; but he is well aware that he must yet come to it. Of the "problems of ethics" he wrote aforetime, "I am not sure that I shall ever publish anything on this subject";² but of late he has approached it in a way that recognizes in a very remarkable fashion the dignity of man in his moral life.³ Even so, his contribution to moral questions is only indicated, and we are still left very much to ourselves in exploring

¹ Bergson: *op. cit.*, p. 281.

² In *Henri Bergson*, p. 44.

³ See *Mind Energy* (1920 ed.), pp. 24 f.

BERGSON'S ATTITUDE TO ETHICS

the tendencies of his philosophy in the realm of ethics.

Bergson bravely declares that the movement of Life operating within the undivided flux of matter, "cuts out in it living beings all along its track."¹ Man, accordingly, is a living being cut out in the flow of reality. Does this mean individuality? It would seem so. Not only so, but Bergson has gone so far as to express the surmise that the survival of individual personality after death is so likely as to be acceptable, especially as disproof of this eventuality is not forthcoming.² Man, therefore, is a soul with an enduring integrity, and capable, accordingly, of playing some definite part in the life process which informs all reality. This may mean that we can do something *in* the life process; or it may mean further that we can do something *with* it. The first of these engagements denotes simply the recognition and salutation on our part of the creative surge by which we, like all else, are filled and borne along, and the yielding of ourselves as vehicles and instruments of its mighty labour. Such a course might develop a New Quietism, a mysticism of Materialism! You may see the kind of uncritical surrender to Life that is thus indicated, in the closing dithyrambics of Joad's *Common-Sense Ethics*.³ But that kind of thing, I fear, will not gather much wool. Let us ask, rather, whether it is not open to man to do something *with* the Life force.

This, in turn, may mean one or other of two courses, according as we are convinced, or otherwise, that the vital process in the world has a purpose before it, an end to which "the whole creation moves," or,

¹ Bergson : *Creative Evolution*, p. 263.

² Bergson in his Address to the Society for Psychical Research.

³ See pp. 199, 201, 202.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

at least, an end towards which it is labouring to bring man himself. If we disbelieve in any such end, then all we can do with ourselves in the world is to let ourselves go in a vigorous effort to attain a maximum of life in all that constitutes us, physically, emotionally, intellectually. This is the type of ethics we have in *Simmel*. On the other hand, if we can conceive, however indefinitely, that to which man is meant to attain by way of development in terms of the creative movement which carried him in its womb at the first and then brought him forth and is now nourishing him and directing his uncertain steps towards unsuspected heights, then it is laid upon us to adventure within the possibilities of our present endowment and the possibilities of our pregnant environment, with a view to bringing forward our species to levels which, compared with the present, may be "beyond man." This is the kind of movement that lies within the gospel of *Nietzsche*.

PART TWO

CHAPTER VI

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION (*Contd.*)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>The ethical theory of Simmel</i>	261
(1) <i>Jesus and values in life</i>	263
(2) <i>Jesus and the attainment of "life"</i>	265
2. <i>The ethical theory of Nietzsche</i>	268
(1) <i>The motives of his doctrine</i>	271
(2) <i>His criticism of Christian morality</i>	
(a) <i>His treatment of "Pity"</i>	272
(b) <i>Compared with that of Jesus</i>	274
(c) <i>"Love" in Nietzsche and Jesus. The</i> <i>"golden rule." "Neighbours." "Love</i> <i>of our enemies"</i>	279
(3) <i>The consummation of Man in Nietzsche and</i> <i>Jesus</i>	283
(a) <i>Nietzsche and the Kingdom of Man</i>	285
(b) <i>Jesus and the Kingdom of God</i>	287

CHAPTER VI

THE MORAL STANDARD AS PERFECTION (*Contd.*)

§ 1. *The Ethical theory of Simmel.*

Simmel is scornful of all attempts to specify any goal in the evolutionary process. So, too, he refuses to believe that in the life of man any single principle can be detected whereby morality can be bounded and regulated. Morality is of interest merely as a subsidiary concern of sociology. What the community will allow in belief and practice is our only business so far as "ought" has any part to play. In the realm of what has been called the moral law, we have only to do with the utterances and control of the "compact majority." What opportunity, then, has the individual in this estate? Every opportunity. A man is at liberty to aspire to constitute the majority; his right to fulfil himself in his own way is paramount, and the only veto upon him is the veto of failure to achieve himself, either through his own incapacity, or by a triumphant resistance and suppression on the part of his fellows. In cases of outstanding virility individuals should be allowed a wider liberty than the community is prepared to grant to mediocre persons in their effort to fulfil themselves. In the case of all men, the measure of what ought to be is to be found in the fulfilment of what is, and that is the fulfilment of life itself, the life that is striving in all things to find release for its inherent

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

vitality and superabundant pressure. Man side-tracks himself in so far as he aims at pleasure ; and more so if he pursues that vague abstraction, "well-being." His ultimate good is simply a "maximum of energy," life lived out at its fullest pressure, surging forward with unreserved abandonment, retreating in turn in pain and disappointment at their utmost, and so oscillating between these poles that it sways along its virile course with dionysian appetite. There is nothing here of that calculating spirit which seeks to fill up the cup of life, wisely and prudently, and then endeavours to carry the full cup circumspectly. A career that "swings" (this is Simmel's word) up and down, or between kindred violences of accomplishment and defeat, taking all that comes as part of the fulfilment of life, so long as it is taken in our stride, is the career that is worth while.

As a *scheme* of conduct all this takes us into a world in which Jesus is a stranger ; but as a spirit of life he might not be altogether at a loss with it. It certainly is out to make the most of life, and Jesus is out to make the most of life.¹ We have already noted how intolerant he is of all that banks down the native fires of life. He would rather have men vigorously absorbed in wayward courses, than lukewarm and only half engaged in the adventures of virtue !—"either make the tree good . . . or make the tree rotten" (Matt. xii, 33). His gospel has frequently been defined as a gospel of life, in accordance not only with his description of it as such, but also with the vigour he showed in his own life and awoke in others. He "oscillated" between experiences so exalted that he was transfigured in his bodily appearance (Matt.

¹ See Illingworth : *Christian Character*, ch. i.

xvii, 2), and experiences so chilled with disappointment that his face seemed set with the rigidity of ice (Luke ix, 51). He seemed to taste life, both the sweet and the bitter of it, in its ultimate flavour, and, in the greatest crisis of his career, when the only thing that now could raise him above the hostile world was a cross, he drank of it as from a cup handed down to him from heaven. We shall not testily toss aside Simmel's claim that life is inherently an acceptance of pain at its utmost as well as exaltation at its highest, when we reflect that in the "blessedness" to which Jesus invited his followers, "persecutions" and "crosses" are an integral part of the experience (Mark x, 30; Matt. x, 38). But so soon as we have justly recognized that the *spirit* of this conception of life beats with the throb that pulses in the movements and message of Jesus, the likeness ends there. Simmel would have it that the strife and the vigorous, full-blooded fluctuations of life *are* life. His theory has been called a "positive apotheosis of Unrest."¹ With Jesus life lies in the *evaluation* of these.

§§ (1) *Jesus and values in life.*

It is simply idle and fruitless to counsel man to let himself go in an indiscriminate resolve to push on his capacities, physical and intellectual and the rest, to their last pulse. If the attempt is made, he will soon be arrested by the discovery that he must light upon or devise some criterion of proportion and mutual adjustment between the various courses along which he drives, now his body, now his intellect, and again his imagination; else fatigue, confusion, and a premature collapse, will speedily overtake him. It were best if a man could "light upon"

Rashdall: *Theory of Good and Evil*, I, p. 279.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

such a criterion. Better this objective standard or set of standards than any subjective device he may contrive to keep him coursing along—and for as long a time as possible—the line of life at his fullest. Simmel can detect no such objective guidance. But Bergson desired it. You remember how he desired that the spirit by which we live in communion with the *élan vital* itself, “could be sustained, generalized, and, above all, assured of external points of reference, in order not to go astray.”¹

Now it is the belief of many that such external points of reference do exist. They are designated and tabulated as the true, the good, and the beautiful. And this is a description which, as we have seen, would have been acceptable to Jesus. “Life” for Jesus was something other in the universe than that surging wave of Bergson’s which issues from a “centre” that is no centre, and constitutes reality by a process of creative experimentation; and, for Jesus, Life, as the aim of the individual, is something other than a sprawling effort to let all the vital impulses within him have the full scope of their urgent activity. Man, in the view of Jesus, attains Life in so far as he adjusts the native ebullition of his being to the plan in which the Creator expresses Himself, detecting the broad and abiding channels in which God wills it that Life should flow, and directing his own being so that it keep true to those eternal currents. Life is ours, that is, in the degree in which we assort our being to the laws of God; but these laws are nothing in the nature of autocratic impositions; they are the native constitution of the Creator Himself, and cannot be otherwise than they are; and we, as involved in that constitution, become

¹ Bergson : *Creative Evolution*, p. 252 : see above, p. 251.

THE ATTAINMENT OF LIFE

ourselves just as we recognize them and salute them as our own.¹ They are the significance of Life and they are the source of Life, God's life and our life in the one creation of Love. Therefore it is that "Life" and the "Realm of God" are synonymous terms in the teaching of Jesus. Everyone who has studied the Gospels knows how the phrase "Realm of God" becomes "Life" as it passes from the Synoptic Gospels to that of *John*. But this cannot any longer be taken as a change of nomenclature by historical stages in the teaching of Jesus. In the primitive record of *Mark* where Jesus is quoted as dealing with a profitable asceticism and urging the excision of hindrances to spiritual achievement, he uses "Life" and "God's Realm" equivalently: "Better be maimed and get into Life," "better get into Life a cripple," "better get into God's Realm with one eye" (Mark ix, 43, 45, 47).²

Life, therefore, is the experience of those whose citizenship is established in the Realm of God. And that Realm has its "laws" "external points of reference, without which we shall go astray." Those laws will be allowed by Jesus to be identified with what we customarily describe as the eternal values of the true, the good, and the beautiful. In so far, therefore, as we envisage those abiding constituents of life and seek to identify therewith all that we are and have, we shall attain the fulness of our being.

§§§ (2) *Jesus and the attainment of "life."*

How shall this devotion to the eternal values, whereby we achieve Life, be set a-going and carried

¹ cf. *John* xii, 50: "I know, (said Jesus), that His orders mean eternal life."

² cf. Major: *Jesus by an Eye-Witness*, p. 49.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

onward to fulfilment? The obvious answer would appear to be, that it awaits upon such engagements on our part as will enhance our apprehension and attainments of science, art and virtue. Is this to be the way of it? If so, we are involved again in the doctrine of "self-realization." We have already given heed to such a procedure in life's fulfilment, and I do not propose to return to it. But there is a particular drawback to it to which I desire to refer. Such a method of "harmonious development" tends to remove its practiser from the place of daily life on which the average man is left to get along as best he may, and it is very apt to set up a standard of life's fulfilment which is only possible to those who are fortunate enough to possess a certain natural endowment of intellectual and æsthetic capacity, and an uncommon degree of leisure and freedom from those material burdens and embarrassments which make the practice of virtue a hardship. Now Simmel does well to protest against all such aristocratic ethics. It is the one Life that Simmel finds, in all, high and low alike; and he would have all to be loyal to the urge within them of the common vitalities that make life warm, rich and simply human. Here, too, although with a different emphasis already noted by us, Jesus takes his stand. With him there is no situation in life, and no intellectual, imaginative, or volitional endowment, in or by which a man need be excluded from the secret of Life or from the citizenship in the eternal Realm in which, as his interpreter put it, *all* men may become "kings and priests" (Rev. i, 6). With Jesus, the true, the good, and the beautiful are not as "cold white stars" beyond the mundane valleys, to which only the elect in thought may "aspire," or as gardens of Epicurus, of which

THE MAXIMUM OF LIFE

only the *cognoscenti* have the mystical key, or as holy cloisters, to which the "religious" alone have access. On the contrary, they are a realm which lies awaiting immediate recognition, at the hearth of ploughmen's cottages, in the streets of turbulent towns, about wells in villages, in wayside flowers and sparrows fluttering in market-places; in fine, in the ordinary, humdrum, and commonplace engagements from day to day of the most ordinary and commonplace men and women. Such recognition of it depends upon a secret; but it is a simple secret. At least Jesus thought it a simple secret.

All this, however, is taking us aside somewhat from the matter in hand.¹ The point I wish to make is this, that Jesus had, and would others have, that disposition of spirit whereby the humblest, the least educated, the least artistic, of men shall discern, not by arduous intellectual or æsthetical pursuits or by virtuous refinements which only the few can follow, but within the commonplaces of ordinary life and in the light of common day, the unfadeable splendour of that Realm within the world, in which truth and goodness and beauty are one, even as all things are one in love, and, "laying up" their life therein, possess "eternal life." This is another attainment certainly than "the maximum of energy" wherein such as Simmel think that life consists. But it is life at its most prolific intensity. There is nothing in it of that philosophical *theoria*, as the ultimate peak of spiritual escape from the rude riot of this boisterous

¹ And yet consider Bergson's words in *Mind Energy*, p. 25, on "men of moral grandeur, particularly those whose inventive and simple heroism has opened new paths to virtue."—"They are nearest the source and they enable us to perceive the impulsion which comes from the deep. It is in studying these great lives, in striving to experience sympathetically what they experience, that we may penetrate by an act of intuition to the life principle itself."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

world, which Simmel very properly derides. It is an eternal life that has no other content than the warm, rich, human relationships and vocations in which we ought to continue to be immersed until the day we pass hence by death; it is not really concerned with life beyond death except as a corollary of life of a particular quality which is attainable here and now; and it is deep and intense enough to transfigure the most ordinary concerns and interests of this earth with a celestial significance, as the body and habit of that divine spirit which is truth and goodness and beauty.¹

§ 2. *The ethical theory of Nietzsche.*

Nietzsche was as fully alive to the prolific surge and creativeness of the Life Force as the most enthusiastic Vitalist of recentest days; but his spirit was so poised above it that he discerned with a definition and hopefulness to which many of his fellow adventurers are strangers, whither the *élan vital* is carrying man, and the outline, at least, of a destiny for the race that struggles purposively for expression within it. It is in his judgment the tragedy of the world that individuals and communities should rest content with the mediocre achievement in which the human race now loiters and decays, as in a pestilent backwater of Life. Nietzsche was a poet, and a musician, and an artist, with such trumpets sounding in his soul that the murmur of the bourgs affected him as the snoring of slaves; with such heroic banners dancing in purple and gold athwart the future that the valleys, in which man fumbled about their daily bread and fondled one another in

¹ See Wendt: *The Teaching of Jesus*, I, p. 256 n., for a very suggestive exhibition of the significance of "eternal life" in *John* as a primary conception in the mind of Jesus.

servile sympathy, were as the valley of the shadow of death; and with such an epic of man's titanic destiny brimming within his imagination that the homeric and miltonic deeds and dreams of the past had become for him little more than wayside puddles, stagnant and pestiferous, an abiding malaria in the soul of the race.

He has been denied, accordingly, the title of philosopher. It is declared to be "difficult to regard him as a scientific writer on ethics. . . . He is stimulating as a prophet, but unreliable as a philosopher."¹ All this is true enough. But it would be truer to say of him that he is a philosopher who, for the greater part of his course, sustains himself at that synoptic level upon which all philosophies make a beginning, however much they may have us forget, as they proceed to foot it up the hill again, that all their scientific journey is destined to come to rest where they once stood as the result of that primary imaginative flight. The fundamental worth of Nietzsche lies in his vision; and that is a vision which has blazed across Europe and continues to afford, in perverse or faded forms, the wisdom for life of an increasing multitude not only there but throughout the world.

His vision is that of a human race carried forward to such a fulfilment of vitality, and so enhanced a quality of body and spirit, that man-to-be shall stand to the creatures we now call men as these stand to the beasts of the field. "I teach you beyond-men," he cried, "man is something that shall be surpassed; what have ye done to surpass him?"² To this he summons mankind to address itself: cease, he

¹ Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 263 f.

² Thus Spake Zarathustra (E. T. by Tille), p. 5.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

cries, the peddling effort whereby your horizon is limited to the little group of people who whine to you to pity and provide for them; look ahead and behold the "ghost" of man as he ought to be, even though he march ahead of you as far away as the end of the world, and give him your loyalty and service, your flesh and bones!¹ Our office in life is "to bring beings to existence who shall stand elevated above the whole species 'man'; and to sacrifice ourselves and our neighbours to this end." Beyond-man shall be more than human as we understand the word, good with a goodness that has transcended our pedestrian notions of morality, a god-like creature who will elicit reverence and a fearful love. He shall be sufficient for himself, delivered from all gods and adorations, having faith and pride in himself, and bearing himself always at radical enmity towards all selflessness.² But he must have ever before him that high purpose which has been described as the incarnation of the "ghost" that marches ahead of the 'human race; and you and I have no right to drive ahead in scorn and pride, unless we are worthy to take that course: "be sure to do whatever ye like—but first of all be such as you can will."³

It is evident from certain of these phrases, and also from the implication of all of them, that the achievement of this beyond-humanity is not within the reach of every individual. Indeed, declares Nietzsche, it is not! That the swarm of mankind, with its infinite variety of soundness of body and strength of will, and virility of spirit, is capable of super-manhood, now or ever, is not to be thought of for a moment.

¹ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 5.

² *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 229.

³ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 252.

THE MOTIVES OF NIETZSCHE'S DOCTRINE

It is *inherently* impossible, and it is *practically* impossible.

§§ (I) *The motives of his doctrine.*

Nietzsche detected the enemy in two camps, which, though mutually hostile, were united, in his judgment, almost as a single organized hindrance to the emergence of beyond-man. The one was Pessimism, and the other was a prevalence of Pity which lay indeed at the heart of that Pessimism, but was entrenched and fortified in another quarter. The former was the pervasive philosophy of Schopenhauer; the latter was Christianity.

The despair with which Pessimism regarded the world and life, and the sickly sentimentality with which it swooned before the pains and sorrows of mankind, went far to provide the goads that stung Nietzsche to wrath and pointed the challenge he flung against the complacency of the European herd and the torpor of those within it who had it in them to assert themselves as gods in the earth. He spurned that inactive surrender of soul which allowed the griefs and defeats of the world so to beat upon it that it came to be slowly stupefied, with no desire or capacity remaining than the craving and defeatist resolution to sterilize the very instinct of life itself and so sink back into unconsciousness.

It was the same morbid pity, with its illicit interference with the heroic pregnancy of Life, that he found in Christianity. It may have had, and did have, a certain survival valve in the past, as Nietzsche himself confesses; but it has become a baneful obsession in the world, it has preserved much that ought to have perished in obedience to the ruthless wholesomeness of Nature, and it is now so customary

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

in ethics, and in social theory and practice, that it is working hand over fist for the deterioration of the European race.¹

I propose that we should now proceed to examine in some detail the particular objections Nietzsche brings against the Christian attitude to life and progress, but with our attention confined to their appropriateness to its pristine bearing in the mind and message of Jesus himself.

§§ (2) *His criticism of Christian morality.*

§§§ (a) *His treatment of "Pity."*

First of all, we shall consider Nietzsche's criticism of Pity. At once let it be observed that the popular estimate of Nietzsche is altogether at sea which represents him as the murderous contemner of Pity in all its aspects and degrees. A single sentence of his should be sufficient to dispose this misapprehension: in his allocution to judges Zarathustra says, "That you are pitiful I take for granted; to be without pity means to be sick in mind and body." Nor is his impatience with *Christian* pity an unrelieved indignation. Nay, he is most generously appreciative of all that Christian benevolence has accomplished in the past in vitalizing mankind.¹ Further, Nietzsche commends very liberally the degree of physical and moral efficiency attained even by the indiscriminate benevolence of present-day civilization, and he approves of the care of the poor and the sick as natural engagements of mankind. Therefore he is not the unequivocal despiser of pity that he is made to appear in popular judgment, and also in certain professedly careful books about him which ought to know better. At the same time, he insists upon certain tests of Pity,

¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 83.

NIETZSCHE AND PITY

failure to meet which is sufficient to set it under condemnation as an evil thing. Pity must be exercised "with mind"; it must be perpetually informed by reason; it must be judged on the ground of its resultant contribution to the heroic effort of bringing to birth man-to-be. Pity in itself is good; it is the action of a native impulse in all creatures, and in man more than in them all, because man more than any other creature is originally altruistic.¹ But, as he contends, there are certain things, which, though good in themselves, ought to be suppressed or crushed, in so far as they bring about results that are seen to be bad when set in the perspective of the racial ideal. Pity is one of these good things.

Pity may have such deleterious results, when these are weighed in the scales of the destiny prefigured for mankind, as to be damnable and meriting destruction. It is here that Christian pity is dragged along as in a tumbril by Nietzsche. It has so come to sprawl abroad in unbuttoned and lavished benevolence that mankind is altogether debauched by it; it begets upon the world a weakly and decadent progeny so that the Earth Mother, fecund with heroic and kingly shapes, becomes more and more sterile and is denied her proper offspring. Its evil results are these: to begin with, it has multiplied and dignified those who are improperly selfish. There is a proper selfishness, but there is an improper selfishness which is merely receptive and, if actively acquisitive, seeks only to fortify itself against those discomforts and hardships which ought to be embraced by men as the birth-throes of a loftier humanity and the violent rockings of the cradle of beyond-man. Again, the complementary and accursed result of this is found in the

¹ See *Will to Power*, par. 771.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

pulling down of those virile souls who have it in them to advance the race. The higher types of men are wasted, their god-like capacities are rendered sluggish in the mush of the mob, they may feel a divine prompting within them to strike out towards the hills of the morning, even though they must trample down whole swathes of their fellows as they make forward, but so clamorous are the protests of the servile multitude and the indignation of the spineless creatures called philanthropists, that they hesitate, and the twilight in which the race dreams and decays envelops them also, and threatens to become a veritable "twilight of gods" who are still-born. So, in the third place, mankind is losing grip of the perennial necessity and law of discipline and suffering in nature. By Pity of the baser sort mankind has come to believe that it is our destined right to be rid of all hardships and pain, and to be lapped in immunity from the labours that are the inherent concomitance of all birth and growth.

§§§ (b) *His treatment of "Pity" compared with that of Jesus.*

Our concern is not so much with such havoc as he makes of much nerveless stuff that passes for Christian benevolence in the modern world, as with the legitimacy of his criticism in reference to Pity as Jesus himself conceived and evinced it. Here, of a truth, we shall find, I surmise, that in some respects Nietzsche is less remote from Jesus than many who prophesy in his name, and in his name succour the outcast and heal the sick. Pity with Jesus was by no means an indiscriminate benevolence. Towards certain types he showed no pity at all, but set his face as flint against them. In certain directions, too,

JESUS AND PITY

as in the case of the rich and prosperous of a particular kind, he uttered a pity which was curdled with irony and even contempt. But what shall we say of his bearing to those dull-witted, sickly, misshapen, or un-vital creatures whom Nietzsche would, as we are told, either relegate to a perpetual bondage to the robust and promising types, or simply eliminate? In answer to this question, it is only right to say that Nietzsche's disposal of such creatures is not so ruthless as those phrases from the popular criticism of him indicate. Of this we shall take further note immediately. But, when we turn to the attitude of Jesus to such creatures, we cannot fail to see that here likewise his pity is by no means a uniform and indiscriminate gentleness. His heart went out to them all. But his "mind" (to use Nietzsche's word) went with his heart, and thereby he dissected the soul within the dull-witted, the sick, and the like, and his pity, while in some cases it overflowed upon them with unreserved mercy and helpfulness, in other cases it assumed a flavour of criticism and judgment, and stipulated for attention and volition on their part in another direction than their obsession by their immediate complaint. The reader of the Gospels cannot remain untouched with the mood of despair which affected the pitiful spirit of Jesus, from time to time, as the incapacity of many even to begin to be worthy of his leadership came home to him. When he calls the Pharisees "blind leaders of the blind," his judgment falls on their flock almost as testily and finally as upon their shepherds (Matt. xv, 14). There is that in the bearing of Jesus here which is not altogether removed from the experience depicted of Zarathustra when he came upon the huddled thing which presently he recognized to be a man. Upon

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

this discovery Zarathustra is so filled with pity that he sinks upon the ground, as might a tree in falling ; but presently he arises and sternly and accusingly addresses the creature that is so unworthy of itself. With Jesus, as with that other sage, Pity is not an emotion of nerveless benevolence which hastens to deliver men from their woes straightway, as with a blind and cozening love that cannot bear to hear a child cry without yielding it all its petulant desire.

But what shall we say of Nietzsche's decree that the hopelessly inefficient and unpromising shall be simply done away with ? Here, surely, any analogy we may have found between his engagement with Pity and that of Jesus, fades away as smoke ! In seeking an answer to this question, we shall do well to bear in mind, to begin with, that Jesus anticipated, as possible, a stage in the history of mankind when those who had failed to become partakers of Life would suffer a fate that was more than equivalent to the destruction that Nietzsche decrees for them. Still, is not that stage, with its mythological furniture, set beyond, after every chance has been offered them and rejected by them in this present life ; and would not Nietzsche take in hand to play the part of that heavenly assize here and now ? Very well, we shall take it so ; but whether there or here Jesus is seemingly content to entertain the thought of some such elimination as Nietzsche proposes. But surely, it will be said, the process Nietzsche advocates is egregiously alien to the spirit of Jesus ? As to that, the protester might very well be recommended to examine what Nietzsche himself would have us do with the hopelessly deficient in society. He would have them set apart and ministered to by the less hopelessly endowed individuals of their own type, as by a kind of

TREATMENT OF THE UNFIT

valetudinarian priesthood. He would see to it that they were eased to the utmost of their discomforts ; and he would administer in all love the expedients of euthanasia ; he indicates that it might be left to themselves to choose the manner of their passing hence, so that the man whom life's energy had deserted should effect his exit as heroically as did the most noble of the Romans.

I cannot think that Jesus can ever be found among these ministers of convenient death. I wonder if Nietzsche himself could so have administered the *coup de grâce* even to the most hopeless among his servile encumberers of the earth. I doubt it. In any case they who, in his polity, are called upon to act that awful part of the priesthood of death, are never regarded by him as those callous butchers of the wretched hinderers of their greedy power and pride, which the customary view of Nietzsche's philosophy portrays. They act at the dictates of a pity and a love which are directed throughout to the highest destiny of mankind ; and he describes them, in the fulfilment of their office of creation and destruction, as having to exercise the utmost control of themselves, lest they "should go to pieces" under the strain of their domestic emotions.

It is entirely conceivable, thinks Nietzsche, that the spectacle of these "higher men" dedicating themselves so religiously to the high ends for humanity of which their superlative vision has consecrated them ministers, will at last impress their so-called "victims" with its lofty significance, so that these shall come to recognize the justice which relegates them to the function of servitors or even proposes to deliver them to the scrap-heap of the race, and that they who are afforded a servile part shall find pride

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

in the contribution they are able to make to the ideal humanity. "Not your pity," declares Nietzsche, "but your bravery has saved hitherto the unhappy." And truly this is a word which might be applied to the mode in which Jesus brought salvation to men. The soft and tender radiance of Jesus' commiserative spirit flashed with a light as of a man in armour, and his engagement with men was that of a courage which called to the nascent bravery within their own diffident hearts. He lamented that cowardly content with things as they are, in which those who were impoverished in spirit or body drifted weakly about, whereas a valorous adventure of faith in themselves and in the world were enough to lift their souls into the current of a divine energy and their bodies to health. Nothing redeemed men so remarkably as the infection of his own courage, and the vigorous wholeness of his vital will.

Once again, the Pity of Jesus is not entirely removed from the spirit that a just understanding discovers in Nietzsche, in this, that in neither is Pity allowed to spell the removal of discipline and struggle in life; nay rather, that the cross is part of the inevitable equipment of life. It is not a stiff and hostile hand that Jesus extends to him who said, "To the men that concern me, I wish suffering, solitude, illness, mistreatment, disgrace. . . . I have no pity for them, because I wish them the one thing that can prove to-day whether a man has value or not—that he hold his ground." ¹

Of course there is a difference of temper between that declaration of spiritual captaincy and such declarations of Jesus as may very well be placed alongside it. Few can fail to detect it. In both there

¹ *Will to Power*, par. 910.

LOVE IN NIETZSCHE AND JESUS

is, indeed, the off-hand gesture with which great captains signal to their affrighted followers to join them if they dare ; but it is with sardonic accents Nietzsche calls to them, and his hand is clenched as he makes his signs ; in the voice of Jesus there is a grave solemnity, and his hand is open towards them as in a caress. There is a *love* in Jesus which the most favourable cannot but miss in Nietzsche. Indeed, love in its Christian significance and effect is to Nietzsche as disappointing and disastrous an emotion as is pity. And yet here again it is laid upon us to distinguish between love as it obtains in the spirit and message of Jesus, and that current regard of it which bred distrust and distaste of it in Nietzsche.

§§§ (c) "*Love*" in Nietzsche and Jesus. The "*golden rule*." "*Neighbours*." "*Love of our enemies*."

Love for Nietzsche was of two kinds. There is a love which sucks and there is a love which suckles. The former is that of "the empty soul" which craves to be full, pawing the beneficent for favours, and turning its vacant mouth in all directions for the teats of ease and pleasure. The latter is that of the abundant spirit, so charged with the energy of life that it cannot contain itself in its desire to communicate its treasure to others and so "possess" them. It is this latter love that elicits Nietzsche's surging praise ; the former he condemns and identifies with the foolish theory and behaviour of Christianity. He essays to carry his scorn of Christian love into the Gospels themselves, and attaching it to certain of the sayings of Jesus, avows that these are involved in that lesser type of love which it is his duty to condemn. This he does, for example, in connection

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

with the "*golden rule*": "Whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them; that is the meaning of the Law and the prophets" (Matt. vii, 12).

Nietzsche has two criticisms to make here. In the first place, he condemns the "*rule*" as a merely prudential evasion, the sly scheme of a man who takes care to bear himself in a certain fashion towards others so that they may "*make it good*" to him similarly; invest in kindness and brotherliness and you shall receive a dividend therein! This is entirely alien to the meaning of Jesus. Jesus means what Kant meant, that we shall have no cause to complain if others treat us "*as an end withal, never as a means only,*" and that we shall fulfil all laws and prophets if, on our side, we "*treat humanity, whether in our own person or in that of any other in every case*" similarly.

But, in the second place, Nietzsche will have nothing to do with the "*equality*" which he detects and condemns even in such an exposition of the golden rule. In the nature of things, he avows, persons are not equal, and in the super-nature that lies ahead of this present age, persons will be ordered in a commonwealth in which inequalities will be more pronounced than ever. But it is plain that there is confusion of thought on Nietzsche's part in this new stage of the controversy. He passes without due heed between equality in the sense of equal endowment of physical and intellectual capacity, of material circumstances, of stations of service, and equality in the sense of the equitable regard that ought to be given all men both in the way of affording them opportunities to fulfil their potential worth, and also in the way of honouring them for the fidelity

THE GOLDEN RULE

with which they discharge their function in the lot which their response to those opportunities has defined for them. Jesus keeps these two points clear. He recognizes, as may be seen, for example, in such parables as those of the Talents (Matt. xxv, 14 ff.), the diversity and inequality of that native equipment of men in their variety, and the necessity of "high" and "low" in any workable society; but, at the same time, he affords full play for that second aspect of the matter noted above. Nay, further, he makes it plain that no man, however lowly his station and meagre his capacity, who is fulfilling his part with zeal and faithfulness, is of lower dignity than the great and mighty; such an one may even rank higher in the realm of true worth than those who are acclaimed as princes among men (Luke xiii, 30; etc.). As a matter of fact, Nietzsche himself, in his vision of the future, outlines a commonwealth in which this equality of the final sort is in great measure conserved. But the difference—and it is a momentous difference—between the republic of Nietzsche and that involved in the fulfilment of the gospel of Jesus, lies in this, that, with Nietzsche, society will take such a shape that the divisions of men and their serviceable grades will be fixed and permanent, they who are lords and serfs shall be so finally and unchangeably, whereas, with Jesus, the whole will remain quick with life, the passage from low to high, and, incidentally, from high to low, will be always open, and opportunities will abound for the blossoming of capacities which in Nietzsche's commonwealth would be doomed to infertility.

As another instance of Nietzsche's critical invasion of the Gospel morality we may take his scorn of all that is exhibited there in the word "*neighbour*." In this he discerns that narrow and sentimental

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

absorption in the little circle of our own domestic relationships, which blind us to the world-wide vision of a new humanity, and render it incapable of the justice that is cruel to be kind. He declares that love to those who are far away is higher than love to those who are near; higher indeed than any love even of those who are nearest and dearest to us, is the love of "things" and "ghosts," by which he means the love of great objectives and ideals for the race. As to this, it would almost seem that Nietzsche had never come across that love of Jesus for "ghosts" which burns with a fire like the arctic aurora in his declaration as to who his "mother and brother and sister" were (Mark iii, 33 ff.), and that the significance of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x, 30 ff.) was quite lost upon him. As to the former of these references, Jesus bore himself towards his own kith and kin as he laid it upon his followers to do: his love of "ghosts" might turn children to "hate" their parents! Again, the Samaritan was prepared to find his neighbour not merely in a humanity which over-tops all hearths, but in one who was his enemy and the despiser of his community.

What would Nietzsche make of this *love of one's enemies*? He tells us. And this we shall take as a concluding instance of the kind of criticism he directs against the moral counsels of Jesus himself. To begin with, he cannot away with that meekness which turns the other cheek, and in weakly submission yields the coat as well to him who has sued for the shirt (Matt. v, 39 f.). This is servile weakness. In reality it presupposes a dignity that is stronger than the self-assertion of the most regal super-man. Again, says Nietzsche, it is depressing and humiliating. It leaves the enemy with a sense of helplessness, loneliness,

THE LOVE OF ENEMIES

and shame, as though the bottom had dropped out of all comprehensible intercourse between man and man. It is a "dreadful" thing to behold a man thus isolated and flung back upon himself; better that we should deal with him in his own coin, at any rate to the extent of a few pence, cursing back *a little* them that curse us, and making at least a gesture towards that tooth of his which he owes us for ours. It is clear, I think, what Nietzsche means by this; and it is to his credit! Unlooked-for as many may describe it, it indicates a real tenderness on his part towards men; it would save them from that contemptuous chill of attitude which those evince who say, "These troublers of my state are as buzzing flies, they are beneath my notice," and so wave them away. But such a speech is utterly foreign to the lips of Jesus, and such a spirit is not his. It is the spirit of that stoical self-sufficiency and pride which is nearer the normal mood of Nietzsche than the considerateness he is now showing. The bearing of Jesus to the active enemy is not that cold and impervious casualness. It is born of a sense of shame on the "meek" man's part that another of the one family should so forget himself and his family obligations as to smite or sue in anger or malice; throughout it is the exercise, at its fullest and bravest level, of that tenderness for the other's self-respect which Nietzsche would show to him, but proposes to manifest in a way which, as anyone of the rudest commonsense may see, would effect no solution at all, but would leave what was bad before worse than ever.

§§ (4) *The consummation of Man in Nietzsche and Jesus.*

In the parallels we have detected between Jesus and

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Nietzsche and even in the divergences we have noticed, we have taken a kindlier course than many will approve. And I know how easily a very different comparison between them could be built up out of the multitudinous aphorisms of Nietzsche, his abundant and feverish utterances, and his many violent and unguarded judgments. But we must be fair to this tortured spirit, fairer even than many of his self-announced disciples.¹ As I said above, the *vision* of Nietzsche is the vital thing. His method of clearing the air for it, and also his attempts to make it concrete, are really of secondary moment. Nietzsche appeared in Europe as a flare of the central fires of

¹ If without irreverence we may accord Nietzsche the title with which he subscribed the last letter he wrote, "the crucified," we may add truly enough that they that surrounded him, parted his garment asunder, and have made many ragged philosophies out of it. A whole nation is understood to have recognized in themselves the caste of super-men which he pictured as occupying the chief place in his commonwealth: a far-fetched and ludicrous application of his theory. An English dramatist has laid hold upon the eugenical side of Nietzsche's teaching and constructed a play which reveals the ultimate stage of beyond-man attained: a dreadful nightmare. A Scottish poet fastened upon the ruthless inspiration with which Nietzsche characterized his "higher men," and, negligent of the lofty "tenderness" which informed and regulated that mercilessness, showed us a super-prince in action who would have roused Nietzsche to assassination. The speech that this poet puts into the mouth of his hero at the end of *The Triumph of Mammon*, is as moving and victorious a pæan as has ever been sounded forth, of the soul of a super-man; but he is not Nietzsche's super-man. Indeed Davidson makes his hero out-super-man the super-man and scorn his creator (page 103 of *The Triumph of Mammon*). Of Nietzsche he cries:

"He posed as Zoroaster, and led us back
To Dionysus: not our mark at all;
The past is past. And, for his prophecy?
Why, Florimond, this Nietzsche was a Christian; . . .
His Antichrist is Christ, whose body and blood
And doctrine of miraculous rebirth,
Became the Overman. Back-of-beyond,
Or—what's the phrase?—Outside good-and-evil:
That's his millennium, and we'll none of it.
I want the world to be much more the world;
Men to be men; and women, women—all
Adventure, courage, instinct, passion, power."

Another partial, and less violent, derivation is to be found in "Gentlemanliness": See J. W. Harvey: Essay, "The Christian Ideal and some of its Competitors," in *Christianity and the Present Moral Unrest*, pp. 38 ff.

THE KINGDOM OF MAN

Life; the blaze of him is his message. His real virtue lies in that burning vision of his of a humanity roused from the torpor of satisfaction with things as they are, contentment with this transitory stage of individual and social attainment, as though the prevalent middle-class morality were the last word of those depths of life beyond us which call passionately to the sluggish depth of life within us. When he had made of his spirit a pipe for that indignant and pleading voice, he had fulfilled his function; thereafter his efforts to articulate it to men outstripped his capacity and ended in broken syllables, contradictory oracles, and the blasphemies which afflict those who are misunderstood and who, because they have wandered beyond their proper province, deserve to be misunderstood.

§§§ (a) *Nietzsche and the Kingdom of Man.*

Nietzsche merits his laurel. In him the word of Blake was in no small measure proved true: "The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction." It was all to the good to hear a Kingdom of Man proclaimed in which all individuals should have their incorporated part. For, as must be maintained, this, and not a violent individualism, is the message of Nietzsche. His "higher men" have been regarded as non-moral Napoleons, each casting about him to fulfil anyhow and anywhere his own private "will to power," in disdainful disregard of every claim on the part of others. In reality, as we have already noted, these capable super-men are as closely and responsibly integrated in the Kingdom-to-be as were Plato's philosophic princes; they are the conscientious creators and sustainers of the commonwealth; they are compelled by "love that sees," by "love with

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

mind," to partition the higher and lower degrees of citizenship among the higher and lower men, and to insist, even though control of them has the appearance of cruelty, upon the fidelity of their service.

There is something here which can be opposed to the vision that Jesus had of the commonwealth of men ; and Nietzsche, of course, did so oppose it. Many consider that in this opposition lies the spiritual contest of our age, and not a few are persuaded that the issue will give the palm to Nietzsche. The conflict is joined at certain vital points. In the first place, the two kingdoms differ irremediably as to who are eligible for the rank of the "higher men." With Nietzsche the category is a limited one ; it is open only to an aristocratic few, while the others are destined to serve without, and that enduringly. Again, what is the basis of assumption within the category of the "higher men ? " Nietzsche indicates that it is concerned with spiritual qualifications, as we may call them, intellectual capacity, vigour of ideas and ideals, fortitude of will, but, at bottom the test is a physiological one. He tells us that self-assertion is "worth as much as the man is worth physiologically." In the third place, Nietzsche's kingdom is one that shall be schematized and superimposed upon the world. It shall be set about and elaborated in plan and then set up and set a-going. In some fashion a self-elected committee of men, possessed of the heroic qualifications, will construct the scheme and bring it into being, adjudicating on the various parts to be occupied by those on whom they impose their will, and adjusting the relation between those who shall form the actual or potential aristocracy and those of the servile order.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

§§§ (c) *Jesus and the Kingdom of God.*

The kingdom that lies in the Gospel of Jesus is certainly of another sort. He, too, it is true, desired the elevation of mankind to a level not less remarkable than that of Nietzsche's "higher men." But, as regards the avenue of that attainment, his emphasis was not upon the physiological aspect of man. We have seen sufficiently that bodily health and the like were indeed of vital moment in his engagement with his fellows; but his primary concern with them was otherwise. It was a spiritual concern, and it addressed itself to the awakening, or the re-awakening, of the children of earth to their heritage within a realm of beauty, goodness and truth, which awaits possession by all who will but adjust their spirit in a certain simple way towards the immediate environment and circumstances of their plain, workaday world. I have endeavoured more than once to elucidate that explorative and revealing adjustment of spirit. In the present connection I would suggest that the reader might do well to ponder what Middleton Murry has to say, with a very remarkable immediacy of insight, of that secret of life which Jesus yearned and laboured to quicken among men. That writer is not even a curate among the doctors of divinity, and his egg has certainly been judged to be unsavoury enough "in parts"; but it is germinal of intuitions of the mind and spirit of Jesus which few theologians achieve. According to Murry the secret of life which Jesus sought to communicate was the secret that constituted his own life. It was "a condition of wholeness,"¹ which obtains, in a fashion, in the soul of a child, but subsequently is obscured. "In the unconscious life of the child there was spontaneity

¹ Middleton Murry: *The Life of Jesus*, p. 177.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

and wholeness ; in the conscious life of the man there was inhibition and division ; in the new life of the member of the Kingdom, there was spontaneity and wholeness once more." There were, for Jesus, three stages in the life of man ; " the unconscious life of the child, and the conscious life of the man, and the new life of the member of the Kingdom." ¹ By the life that abounded within himself and that he endeavoured to convey to others, " he saw, for he had known within himself, the change in kind that may overtake humanity, as it overtook the animal when the first tiny *homo sapiens* blinked at the new world." ² " Fundamentally, it was an act of profound obeisance to the apprehended wonder and beauty of the universe—a sudden and for ever incontrovertible seeing that all things have their place and purpose in a great harmony." ³

If we may accept meantime such an interpretation of the mind and way of Jesus, we may pass on to reflect that this advance of man to beyond-man, if we may use Nietzsche's term in this very different setting, is not limited, as is the case in Nietzsche's doctrine, to a select number of men, endowed physically and intellectually in a degree that places them in an aristocratic category apart. It awaits upon a disposition of soul which Jesus was loth to think of as lacking in any man. The " ghost " to which Nietzsche decrees we must give ourselves is no longer a ghost that marches on far ahead of us, nor the racial ghost, but that radical ghost within all men which came to be recognized among Christians as the Holy Ghost. All have within them this incipient illumination.

Here, too, I turn aside to say, we detect a difference

¹Middleton Murry : *The Life of Jesus*, p. 184. cf. p. 218.

²*ut sup.*, p. 73.

³*ut sup.*, p. 190.

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

in the ways in which Nietzsche and Jesus anticipated the advent of their respective kingdoms. With Nietzsche it was by means of the super-imposition of a rule upon the world. With Jesus it is otherwise. Nietzsche's is more akin the mode that appears in John the Baptist's prophecies. Murry does not make that comparison; but in comparing the kingdom in John Baptist and in Jesus, he says that in the latter "the nature of the reign of God was completely changed from what it had been to John the Baptist: it was changed from the transcendental theocracy established through the stern and awful judgment of God's Messiah into the blessed company of reborn and reunited sons of God."¹

¹ Middleton Murry: *The Life of Jesus*, p. 197.

PART THREE

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND SYSTEMATIC IN ETHICS

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>Jesus' wisdom of life and the ethical schools</i> . . .	293
2. <i>Is his wisdom "systematic" ?</i>	
(1) <i>Not in the customary sense</i>	294
(2) <i>But his wisdom has an "horizon"</i>	295
(3) <i>The "horizon" as truth, goodness, beauty</i>	296
(4) <i>The "horizon" as God</i>	299
3. <i>Morality as independent of a "world-view"</i>	301
(1) <i>Morality involves a "world-view"</i>	302
(2) <i>The "world-view" as theistic</i>	303
(3) <i>The "world-view" as religious</i>	306

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND SYSTEMATIC IN ETHICS

§ 1. *Jesus' wisdom of life and the ethical schools.*

We have now completed our survey of the various ethical schools and our endeavour to detect the place that Jesus and his moral wisdom may be found to hold among them. And now I propose that we should ask ourselves what conclusions we may draw as to the relation of Jesus and his tuition for life to the moral detections and decrees that are established among men, and as to the ethical principles which lie at the heart of his wisdom as its secret.

One obvious conclusion we may certainly draw is this, that no one of the ethical schools may claim Jesus exclusively as its own. On the contrary, we have seen reason for affirming that there are no moralities, such as have sustained themselves in the attention and devotion of mankind, with which Jesus is altogether devoid of some measure of affinity.

Such a statement may be gratefully seized upon by those who are accustomed to claim for Jesus the ultimate and central position in moral wisdom, and to honour him as the culmination of all the fragmentary or one-sided endeavours whereby men in their separate tribes and schools have sought to define the meaning and scope of their life. It may be so ; we have been led to see a remarkable sympathy in the spirit of Jesus within the cycle of those endeavours, but there are

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

not a few who declare that this is the result, not of a mediating ethics, or of a consummate principle which works throughout their variances and oppositions as might a reconciling dialectic, but simply of a mind so richly charged with the gift of intuitive discernment that, now on this side, and again on that, it flashed forth moral judgments, maxims, aphorisms, to which kindred flames leapt out from the hearths of the different schools. If this be the way of it, then the *métier* of Jesus may be defined, at its highest, as that of moral genius, and, at its lowest, as that of a temperamental opportunist: but, in either case, he cannot be given that supreme place among the reasoners on life such as constitute the sages of the ethical schools. We have already given some heed to this view of the morality of Jesus, but we must now take note of it more duly.

§ 2. *Is his wisdom "systematic"?*

§§ (1) *Not in the customary sense.*

It is a view which is indisposed to see any appreciable systematization in the moral tuition of Jesus. There are even disciples of his who are content to regard him as the prophet of a new *lore* for life, the supreme exemplar of that poet in conduct, in comparison with whom the ethicist stands as detached from life or as the symbol of that uncreative age of which Blake cries, "Bring out number, weight, and measure, in a year of dearth!" This may be truth of the matter. But meantime let us be content to agree that in the records of the teaching of Jesus we have no *system* of the moral life patently exhibited. It may be none the worse for that.¹ Lack of system,

¹ Henry Jones: *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 154.

SYSTEM IN THE WISDOM OF JESUS

in the customary sense of the word as applied to ethical pronouncements, does not mean, however, that *thought* is lacking; and certainly there are signs that the "intuitions" of Jesus are intellectually informed. I doubt the validity of Pigou's phrase (or perhaps I should say the inference of it) that the spirit of Jesus was without "reflection" upon the intuitions which are understood to have inspired him. Others are assured that he "must have exercised the philosophic mind, must have achieved a philosophy of life," and that "a consistent one."¹ This declaration may proceed further than some of us are prepared to go at present; but it is entirely just in so far as it maintains that *thought* underlay his wisdom, or, as we may put it, that his teaching had reference throughout to an *horizon* which can be traced in such a way as might satisfy the philosophically minded. The most homely of his counsels to men and women, and of his allusions to nature, are felt by us to be touched with a ray from the rim of the world; and sometimes the curve of the ultimate setting of all things comes sweeping, in his simplest phrases, through such mundane movements as the wheeling of a sparrow to the ground or the circling of children's play.

§§ (2) *But his wisdom has an "horizon."*

Wendt is persuaded that we may not suppose that Jesus "carried about with him a system of his teaching elaborated in detail." But, on the other side of it, Wendt would have us know that an "activity of judgment on the part of Jesus, which was constantly advancing and producing something

¹ Dougal and Emmet: *The Lord of Thought*, pp. 3, 9. cf. Matthews: *Studies in Christian Philosophy*, pp. 14 f., and Streeter: *Reality*, p. 204.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

new, had its basis in a *general view* which as to principle was securely settled, and whose form, so far as we are able to judge from our sources, did not change or develop during the brief period of his public messianic activity." ¹ This "general view" is what I have called the *horizon* of his moral address to life. Already we have had occasion to see with some degree of fulness its character and significance. He saw life and all things to be set within the "Realm of God" which had its own meaning for contemporary thought and mysticism, but which he informed with his own appreciation of reality.

§§ (3) *The "horizon" as truth, goodness, beauty.*

Translated into modern phraseology it is the pronouncement that the "real" must be interpreted in terms of value; the ultimates of existence are the informative principles which we appreciate as the True, the Good, and the Beautiful; that the world is the vehicle or information of these; and that in so far as man awakens to this inner significance of the world and surrenders himself to it, and admits it as the destined currency of his life, he attains the stature of his soul and assumes his citizenship in the heritage that was his from the first. From the utterances of Jesus and from the poise and elevation of his spirit, the impression is incontrovertible that he regarded those values as an inherency of existence that is objectively and eternally real. *Truth* was for him a reality that was there in the world independently of man's varying judgments as to what is true or false; and so too with Goodness and Beauty. In reply to Pilate he spoke of himself as the herald of a truth which, to his mind, had that independence, as of a royal

¹ Wendt: *Teaching of Jesus*, II, pp. 389 f.

THE HORIZON OF HIS WISDOM

presence that required royalty in its ambassador : "Certainly I am a King. This is why I was born, this is why I came into the world, to bear testimony to the truth" (John xviii, 37). Again, he spoke of his ministry of the truth as that of a priest who served an eternal altar, and he was careful to consecrate himself in order that his followers might be assured of the benefit of the altar : "For their sake I consecrate myself that they may be consecrated by the truth" (John xvii, 19). Again, he looks to truth, not as a pragmatistical expedient devised by man to ease his contact with the tumultuous rudeness of the world, or to increase his elbow-room in the congested flux of experience, but as a celestial government, established above and within the world, in whose citizenship and service is perfect freedom : "you will understand the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John viii, 32). Once again, he refers to truth, not simply as a reality static and isolated in its perfection, or as an "idea" that is temporarily diverted to constitute this mundane experience of ours, but as a spiritual movement which pervades earth with the effluence of a creative and inspiring breath and is the active agent in the minds of those who would know and possess the truth : "the Spirit of truth will lead you into all truth" (John xvi, 13).

Similarly, *Beauty* shone through the world upon the spirit of Jesus as from an eternal realm. His æsthetical judgments have been very ill preserved in the partial records his followers made of him, but such as so remain reveal a vision in his mind of a supernal glory in nature, and in all who love and serve. But these are but broken hints of an enduring responsiveness which we savour throughout his spirit

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

towards a charm and splendour that lie eternally at the heart of reality. To him the loveliness of flowers, which to many is no more than a transience of bloom, an accessory without utility, since weaving-looms can make nothing of it, is not only indicative of a lavishness of productiveness in the earth, but is the veritable incarnation of a spirit of joyful beauty in the heart that beats in the innermost of nature and all life (Matt. vi, 28). In the souls of children, that brief phase of charming simplicity and innocence which even Christian hymns have taught many to regard as almost foolishly related to the realities of existence and as idle a contribution to the business of life as is the frolic joyousness of lambs in April pastures to the meat-market, was to him a glimpse of a beauty that rings the enthroned secret within the heavenlies; these fragile and fugitive charms of theirs have their prototypes as of radiant creatures and angelic shapes whose faces shine with the eternal glory of God's face (Matt. xviii, 10).

We need not dwell on the indications which make it plain that the *Good* likewise was objectively real to Jesus as of the ultimate essence of existence. It is for him that which, if a woman seek and "choose," and, in her degree, attain it, "cannot be taken from her," but satisfies her soul's appetite and nourishes her in eternal life as might a heavenly food (Luke x, 42). To the man, to whom the term "good" was only an epithet to be applied to particular deeds as their particular quality, or (to take the variation of the incident in a later Gospel) only such a word as is used in a phrase of address like "my good man," he swept the word upwards above all such relativities and fixed it in solitary splendour on the throne of the heavens; "good" is majestic and eternal, the

THE HORIZON AS GOD

characteristic or, indeed, the character of God Himself: "Why do you ask me about what is good? One alone is good" (Matt. xix, 17); "Why call me 'good?' No one is good, no one but God" (Luke xviii, 19).

§§ (4) *The "horizon" as God.*

These latter sayings of his add this to our knowledge of his regard of the eternal values, that he envisaged them not as spiritual abstractions in any way, but as inherent in the personality of Him whom he spoke of as the Father in heaven. The modern philosophical problem which is so teased with the location of the constituent values would have been abruptly resolved by him. The problem offers us one other of two alternatives: either the values are simply ideals within the distinguishable realms of human interest, which men project beyond the tangle of their confusedly developing experience, and use as pragmatical norms to guise and assort their scientific, moral and æsthetical judgments; or they are transcendental realities which are nevertheless immanent in our experience, and by which it behoves us to regulate our engagements with nature and life. The former alternative is alien to the thought of Jesus. The latter it is that forms the nerve of his mind. But such an interpretation of Truth, Goodness and Beauty can only be sustained on the postulate that they are "borne" within personality. Persons alone are *bearers* of value; and the fact that creatures, such as man, are so dignified is only possible if the values in their full significance and array are "borne" by such a personality as we, with all the halting and groping measures of our minds, are nevertheless constrained to picture God to be. The ground of

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

this statement is familiar to all students of such thinkers as Ward and Sorley.¹ We are not called upon to accept or debate the metaphysic entertained by these and the like philosophers. I refer to them as illustrative simply of that vigorous and wholesome philosophical appraisal of the eternal values, which bears out—very triumphantly, to my mind—the identification which Jesus made, immediately, it would seem, naturally and inevitably, between the heavenly reality of Truth, Goodness and Beauty and God the Father. “God is Spirit,” he said (John iv, 24); and that Spirit is, at least, Goodness and Truth and Beauty. I have already quoted that saying of his which resumes Goodness as inherent in God. As to Truth, his assertion that they that worship Him “must worship Him in spirit and in truth,” involves the reality of Truth as likewise constituent of His being (John iv, 24). And Beauty, too, has its abiding seat in Him, and is His minister who festoons His earth with flowers conceived by His own loveliness, and advances the myriad blades of grass as the spears of his adorable pageantry (Matt. vi, 28, 30).

As I suggested a little ago, the implication of the Values in God as the basis and tenement of their eternal existence, is nowhere expounded by Jesus. Of the existence of God Himself there is no argumentation to be found in him.² He would have them “see God” by that sincerity of outlook upon the world and its values, that surrender of soul to the virgin beauty of the field and the life where-with it blooms in unimaginable plenitude, and that

¹ cf. also Mellone: *Eternal Life and Life Hereafter*, pp. 124 ff.; and Lotze: *Microcosmos*, p. 728.

² See Deissmann: *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, p. 44.

MORALITY DEPENDENT ON A WORLD-VIEW

unsophisticated response to the loves that are native to the hearts and homes of our fellows and our own, which he called "purity of heart" (Matt. v, 8). He would have them know that that was open to them, at their peasant hearths and in the meadow beyond their cottage walls, which Moses alone of all the twelve tribes was permitted to behold, and so at intervals only, and only after such adventures as he might have who passed within the fiery furnace of a volcano fenced with death. Heaven awaits all, and "lies about them," who permit themselves to be converted to this "infancy." To see God means, among other things, "to estimate the world according to a scale of values other than the common. It is to see the littleness of much that man calls great, the greatness of much that man calls little. It is to consider the lilies of the field, and to see that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." ¹

§ 3. *Morality as independent of a "world-view."*

So much for a sketch of the "general view," as Wendt calls it, with which the ethics of Jesus are set about, or the "horizon," as we have designated the circle of reference implied in his moral interests and counsels. I am well aware that certain ethicists have a quarrel with all such moralities, and look narrowly, nay, forbiddingly, on them as introducing an illegitimate element into ethical study. They would have ethics busied with its own subject matter with no further an interest in ultimate problems than any other science is expected to have. Instances of these evangelists are readily found.²

¹ Streeter's Essay on "The Historic Christ" in *Foundations*, p. 99.

² e.g. Leslie Stephen: *Science of Ethics*, pp. 447 ff.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

§§ (1) *Morality involves a "world-view."*

Such a position, however, is difficult to maintain, even on the side of its most ardent professors. Not even Stephen, who gives over the tortoise and the elephant to the Hegelians, and plumps for the "solid earth," can altogether neglect the sky-line, or remain indifferent to the stability of that perplexing fundament on which he proposes to build. It is quite true, as Bosanquet concedes, that a reasonable view, by which he means "a right arrangement according to affinity and value," can be presented of the facts of human life "without metaphysical formulæ." At the same time, Bosanquet affirms that, while "it is possible to present a reasonable view of moral facts without explaining all the metaphysical ideas that such a view may ultimately be found to imply," in the last resort there is no ethics that can ultimately be divorced from its theory of reality.¹

The ethical theory which might be expected to go farthest on its own steam, or conceivably to paddle its own canoe indefinitely, is the type known as Utilitarianism. But even it feels constrained to take its bearings by some pole-star that can hardly be described as a rivet in its own machinery. The instance of Sidgwick and his moral theory is a well-known case in point. In the first edition (1874) of his *Methods of Ethics*, he declares, "The whole system of our beliefs as to the intrinsic reasonableness of conduct must fall, without a hypothesis, unverifiable by experience, reconciling the individual with the Universal Reason; without a belief, in some form or other, that the moral order which we see imperfectly realized in this actual world, is yet actually

¹ Bosanquet: in the vol. of Essays already referred to, *Ethics and Religion*, pp. 218, 217.

THE WORLD-VIEW AS THEISTIC

perfect . . . the Cosmos of Duty is really reduced to a chaos ; and the prolonged effort of the human intellect to frame a perfect ideal of rational conduct is seen to have been foredoomed to inevitable failure." ¹ In subsequent editions this pronouncement was refashioned, either because he would keep more strictly within what is called the province of pure ethics, or because he would avoid seeming to depend on the Kantian postulate. In any case the pronouncement was docked ; but even so he makes quite as plain in his later editions that such a horizon is "logically necessary to avoid a fundamental contradiction in one chief department of our thought." ²

We would conclude, therefore, that if an ethical theory is to be warned off because of its openly tracing out its domestic concerns to an inclusive horizon, all ethical theories will end by being sent a-packing.³

§§ (2) *The "world-view" as theistic.*

We may still make bold, therefore, to entertain the moral wisdom of Jesus as entitled to a place among the academics, despite the fact that it comes to us framed in its own particular horizon. But the ethical purist is not yet done with us in this court of first instance. He may be willing, albeit grudgingly, to admit an ethic to status and consideration, that involves a horizon of a theoretic or metaphysical kind ; but this morality of Jesus has a God seated on the arc of it, with all that apparatus of *religious* sanctions in view, which many besides the puritan among the

¹Sidgwick : *Methods of Ethics* (1874), p. 473.

² See on this, Pringle-Pattison : *The Idea of Immortality*, p. 177 ; Rashdall : *Theory of Good and Evil*, I, pp. 52 f.

³ cf. Mackenzie : *Manual of Ethics*, p. 457. See also, Rashdall : *Theory of Good and Evil*, II, pp. 191 ff. ; Davidson : *The Stoic Creed*, p. 209 ; Martineau : *Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 1.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

ethicists regard with scientific suspicion. They bid us avoid all such *theistic* complications of the subject. Kant's postulate of God is tolerable as a buttress which he thought necessary, although others think the walls of his scheme strong enough without it, and regard it as of little further use than an intellectual ornament. But ethics of the theistic sort make more of God than that. They make so much of Him that they come to lose their distinctive character and end by being absorbed in that intractable business which goes by the name of Religion.

Now, as to this, I have only to observe that I know of no enduring ethics of a theistic type that is not as jealous as any other of the distinctiveness and relative independence of morality. And I would further observe that, from the days of Plato to the present time, theistically informed ethics constitute an undiminished tradition in philosophy and are still due as honourable a place as any other.

In this I refer to such a frank maintenance of the theistic tradition in ethics as may be instanced in men like Ward, Sorley, Rashdall, Caird, Watson, Henry Jones, and the like. But symptoms of the same may be found in other households of philosophical enquiry; and some of these are almost the last place in which we might expect to find them lurking. Putting aside these latter for the moment, I would remind you of Bradley's forlorn affiancement with what he calls "religion." To this, with a certain irony, and yet with unmistakable sincerity, he hands over the insoluble problems of ethics—in particular the reconciliation of the "two great divergent forms of moral goodness."¹ This he delivers to that "faith in God" which theoretically

¹ Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 415.

THE ETHICAL NEED OF THEISM

involves a relationship which cannot be explicated or justified,¹ but which works peace and encouragement in the soul of man. To Bradley, of course, the Absolute of philosophy and the God of faith are irreconcilable olympians,² but for both he finds a place in human life. In the end, we are justified in concluding that with him God is as needful a constituent of the moral life as He is in the most affirmative theistic scheme.

I said that in unexpected quarters too we come upon symptoms of the necessity which ethics feel is laid upon them to engage morality with the conception and communion of God. I shall do no more than refer to some of these. Robust amateurs in the philosophy of life like H. G. Wells, and his romantic exhibition of a veiled Being and that secondary struggling God in whose promethean labour for the human race man is counselled to put his trust and to yield himself in his own desperate battle ; Haeckel, with whose name, now mute, the world was ringing a generation ago, and his amazing conversion of the cathedrals of Europe to the cult of his materialistic monism ; Comte himself with his " religion " ; these might suffice to illustrate what I say. But in recenter times we have instances in the boisterous and downright " common-sense ethics " of Joad, and in the cheery atheistical outlook on life of Julian Huxley. Huxley will have nothing of your belief in God as a person, a ruler, a spiritual Being in any way.³ Enough for him that the name of God be given " to the sum of the forces acting in the cosmos as perceived and grasped by human mind. We can therefore

¹ Bradley, *ut sup.*, p. 444.

² Henry Jones questions and considers he has adjusted this antagonism in *A Faith that Enquires*.

³ J. Huxley : *Essays of a Biologist*, p. 297.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

now say that God is one, but that, though one, has several aspects.”¹ And yet, “the universe does come into relation with our minds, and there, owing to the way it and our minds are organized, generates an idea which exerts an influence upon us.”²

We have already noted the Vitalism of Joad and the somewhat indeterminate surge he makes of reality in terms of the Life Force. But nothing could be more definite than this philosopher's infusion of morality with divinity. “It is difficult,” he declares, “to discuss the alleged unique position of morality, or the meaning of right and wrong, without taking for granted some conception of the nature of the Universe, and the business and significance of human life within it; you cannot make up your mind about the good, until you have tried to make up your mind about God.”³

Once again, as against those who will not admit ethics of a theistic sort to matriculate in the philosophical schools, we continue with good reason to maintain the place therein of the moral wisdom of Jesus.

§§ (3) *The “world-view” as religious.*

We began our enquiry in a spirit of accommodation to the scholiasts who would have ethical study strictly reserved to its own subject-matter and its native categories; and we endeavoured within those limits to see, if we could, how his wisdom stands to the typical modes of moral philosophy. In particular we sought to estimate it apart from all those *religious* complications of it which, in the judgment of many, so entangle it that it hardly merits any attentive consideration at

¹ J. Huxley: *Essays of a Biologist*, p. 262.

² J. Huxley: *ut sup.*, p. 266.

³ Joad: *Common-Sense Ethics*, p. 177.

THE WORLD-VIEW AS RELIGIOUS

all in the field of ethics pure and simple. But the situation is now one in which we may, without any foolish apology, register the confession which has been long impending, that we cannot separate the moral wisdom of Jesus from his business with the awareness of God's presence and communion with God, and that his ethical secret must be looked for in that quarter. I have chosen these phrases carefully in anticipation of those who may very probably now declare that our prolonged engagement with a comparison of Jesus with the recognizable masters in ethics has been greatly in the air, and who, with a tolerance stretched to breaking-point, announce their abandonment of any further interest in the theme; and this they announce on the ground that, since the ethics of Jesus are now frankly relegated to his commerce with God, they understand very well what that means; it means, they say, what the majority of the devotees are surely agreed upon, namely, that Jesus' chief concern is not with ethics at all, but with *religion*, and that the secret of his morality is to be found there and there alone.

Now, upon this criticism of our method and the present stage of our enquiry, I would make two remarks. In the first place, I would deprecate that complaint of the inutility of the survey we made of the ethical wisdom of Jesus in relation to the schools. And this I do for a chief reason among others, and that is, the repeated appreciation afforded us in the course of it of an attitude and approach to life and nature on the part of Jesus which, though they evinced themselves to us from various points of view, eluded anything like exact definition by us, but which we could not avoid detecting as the secret of his engagement not only with human affairs but with reality in

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

general. It is this, rather than theology, or, as we may yet have reason to add, any religion, that ought to be explored by those who would determine the real constituent of his wisdom of life and his apprehension of the universe. We harden all this, so that its very sap and fragrance almost altogether vanish, when we try to define it as theological presuppositions on the part of Jesus, or even as the sovereignty of religion in his mind and experience, unless the word "religion" is extended beyond what I would regard as its legitimate connotation.

In the second place, and in connection with what I have just said of the connotation of the word religion, I would underline what I observed as to looking for the ethical secret of Jesus in his business with the awareness of God's presence and communion with God. I desire to put it so because I am not readily convinced by those who, either adversely or approvingly, trace his moral wisdom to a spiritual engagement with reality which they call *religion*, and declare it to be so immersed therein that Jesus is finally designated a religious rather than an ethical sage. To put it quite bluntly, I am by no means sure that religion is the source, or inspiration, or secret, of his moral wisdom or of any other aspect of his wisdom.

PART THREE

CHAPTER II

IS RELIGION THE ETHICAL SECRET OF JESUS ?

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. <i>The uncertain connotation of the word Religion</i>	311
(1) <i>This is a comparatively recent perplexity</i>	311
(2) <i>Religion made subservient to Theory</i>	314
(3) <i>The revolt under Schleiermacher</i>	314
2. <i>The definition of Religion</i>	316
3. <i>Is Religion, as thus defined, the ethical secret of Jesus?</i>	319
(1) <i>Contemporary rites and religious societies as affected by Jesus</i>	320
(a) <i>The "institution of the Lord's Supper"</i>	323
(b) <i>Did Jesus found a religious community?</i>	324
(2) <i>His relation to the theology of his time</i>	326
(3) <i>His relation to the religious spirit of his time</i>	327
4. <i>Further consideration of the significance of Religion</i>	329
(1) <i>Religion as an independent spiritual interest</i>	330
(a) <i>Rudolf Otto</i>	331
(b) <i>Religion as engaged with a "fourth value"</i>	333
(2) <i>Religion as an issue (with three others) of an "original wholeness" of spirit</i>	336

CHAPTER II

IS RELIGION THE ETHICAL SECRET OF JESUS ?

§ 1. *The uncertain connotation of the word Religion.*

I concluded the preceding chapter by affirming my uncertainty as to whether religion is the source, or inspiration, of the moral wisdom of Jesus. There is no word that suffers so much vagueness, and even maltreatment of meaning as this word religion ; and I dare to suggest that we might do well to attempt the redding of our thought of it. I know the difficulties and perils of such an attempt. Nevertheless I suggest that we should adventure it, as men who see that all is inconclusive in the study of spiritual things unless we make up our minds as well as we can about this critical interest of mankind.

§§ (1) *This is a comparatively recent perplexity.*

We would do well to begin by reminding ourselves that the perplexity that afflicts us in respect of the definition of religion is a comparatively recent perplexity. The confusion of the word is a modern confusion. Before the eighteenth century our forefathers were in no real doubt as to what religion meant and stood for. Religion was an established engagement of their souls, their mind, conscience and will, with a divinity or economy of divinities in the heavens, who, at the same time, were as close to them in communion as were the sacred symbols on

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the altars within their temples in which, by the inherent necessity of the spiritual engagement, they met communally in the fulfilment of effectual rites and ceremonies, to the end that they might please the divinity, secure his good-will, gain confidence in life and in the prospect of death, and reinforce their kinship the one with the other as the offspring or re-born children of God. This, and not any one section of it, but all of it together, was what was plainly and everywhere recognizably intended by religion. "However far we travel backward in historic ages," declares W. P. Paterson "we can discern the worshipper, the altar, and the uplifted hands of prayer."¹

Twilight fell upon this daylight tradition in the age of Kant, and chiefly by reason of the manner in which he himself dealt with religion. Kant was responsible for a view of religion which side-tracked it as a mere addendum or appendix to morality. Thereafter it was either entirely relegated, as by Comte, to the category of spiritual interests that have been out-lived by man, or admitted, as by Hegel, by a more comprehensive view of reality, as the merely popular and unreasoned form of that philosophy. In a word, religion is popular metaphysic ; and while the mass of men may get along sufficiently well by means of those concrete, imaginative symbols of reality which form the world-view offered by religion, it is to a proper metaphysic that they must turn who would attain the ultimate significance of the essential world. This intellectualizing of religion and its ultimate absorption in philosophy have been carried far. In the Hegelian tradition as developed by such as Croce the same disposition and temper

¹ W. P. Paterson : *The Nature of Religion*, pp. 23, 24.

THE DEFINITION OF RELIGION

may be detected. To him religion is a shadowy and misleading form of philosophy, and stands as make-believe before it, even as myth stands as a counterfeit of reason in the court of reason. And, as he says, "since myth is not distinguishable from philosophy by any positive character, but only as false philosophy from true philosophy, and as error from the truth which rectifies and contains it, we must affirm that religion, so far as it is truth, is identical with philosophy, or, as can also be said, that philosophy is the true religion."¹

Now it is clear that in all this, one aspect, and one aspect alone, of the spiritual enterprise that men hitherto have understood by religion, has been abstracted from the rest and made to appear to be its only significance. Religion may now be claimed to be fully engaged in by the philosopher who dwells apart in his study with no other company about him than the ghostly categories of his own theory, and no other ritual than that of a mathematician who makes chalices of circles and the trinitarian sign with triangles. It is this that has brought about those freakish definitions of religion which clever theorists like William James and Whitehead have set a-fire like squibs about us. Religion, says James, is "the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the Divine."² And Whitehead reiterates several times within the compass of a few pages his oracle that "religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness."³

¹ Croce : *Logic*, p. 447.

² Wm. James : *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 31.

³ Whitehead : *Religion in the Making*, p. 6, etc.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

§§ (2) *Religion made subservient to Theory.*

This tendency to make of religion an undesirable bond-maiden to theory, and to leave it to any man to declare that religion is his in whatever engages him in his own little grey hut, east or west, has not gone without protest by those who really have to do with what mankind is making of its soul, and who, accordingly, realize that men of quite a respectable intellectual equipment still build temples and kneel at sacraments and shout aloud in psalms, as men who know what they are about and mean it! A proper impatience towards it is shown by Pfeiderer in a pronouncement which restores to view those other necessary and intrinsic elements in religion which it had become fashionable to regard as altogether unessential. "The theory," he declares, "that from the beginning religion has been a pure affair of the understanding, intellectual in intention though in the result utterly erroneous, that it had nothing to do with feeling and practical needs and demands, no root in an imagination touched with emotion, is the most ill-founded hypothesis that has been propounded, save only that which proclaimed the idea of God to have been an arbitrary invention."¹ This is soundly protested. Religion is not always, or even generally, engaged in learning or finding out the truth of things; it is more actively engaged in *living* the life of things.²

§§ (3) *The revolt under Schleiermacher.*

Impatience with this intellectualizing of religion,

¹ Pfeiderer : quoted by Paterson, *The Nature of Religion*, p.307.

² cf. Evelyn Underhill : *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-day*, p. 139—"A whole world of spiritual experience separates the humble little church mouse, rising at six every morning to attend a service which she believes to be pleasing to a personal God, from the philosopher who meditates on the Absolute in a comfortable armchair : and no one will feel much doubt as to which side the advantage lies."

the denudation of certain of its essential characteristics and its scornful absorption in theory, took fire, as is well known, in Schleiermacher as in a beacon upon a headland. And in recenter times the amazing wealth of lore which anthropological and psychological research has heaped upon the field of religious enquiry, has been as an increasing fortification about the gallant fight he put up in support of the domestic independence of religion and its claim to its ancient patrimony. At bottom it is based upon the reasonable demand that words should be used to describe the things they were intended to describe. G. F. Romanes insisted upon this with wholesome clarity of mind and phrase.¹

The result of the reasonable reaction referred to has been to restore to the precincts of our understanding of religion those elements which the main trends of philosophy since Kant's time had stripped from it as illusory or, at best, meaning something very different from what the practisers of religion thought them to be. For myself, I should seek to learn what religion is from those to whom religion itself is the chief interest, not merely from the standpoint of an intellectual engagement, but, as importantly, from the angle of men who themselves know the practice of it. The austere metaphysician, or the most learned of anthropologists, though he take all fetishes, magics, and sacrifices as his province, may nevertheless be an imperfect guide in the knowledge of religion. Yet even he does attain a residuary conception of it which makes plain how far we have travelled from Comte and Hegel. I am thinking of Sir James Frazer in this. Religion issues to him, as the result of his encyclopædic researches, as a theurgic not a theory.

¹ Romanes : *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 42, 41.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

He finds it to be something in which mankind acts more than thinks. "Religion," he affirms, "has consisted of two elements—belief in powers higher than man and an attempt to propitiate or please them."¹ This is a bald enough description; but it draws a boundary within which may fruitfully reappear those several elements which the austere intellectual had rooted out from the ancient conception of religion.

§ 2. *The definition of Religion.*

I shall give in sequence three examples of the summary conclusions such scholars offer us in their essay towards a modern definition of religion. Religion, according to D. S. Cairns, has three great constant elements: first, the conception of an unseen ruling world; second, some conception of the supreme good which the worshipper seeks to derive from heaven; third, every one of the religions has its own way or means of uniting the worshipper with God.² All three, he considers, are present no less remarkably in Animism than in the religion called Christian. Again, Religion, according to Miall Edwards, "in its origin is seen to be a sense of awe and mystery in the presence of the indefinable and incalculable power—supraphysical power—manifested in things, persons, and events, together with the attendant effort on man's part to adjust himself negatively and positively to that power, with a view to satisfying certain felt needs of his life."³ Once again, Galloway, as a result of a patient and illuminating summary of the various modes in which definitions

¹ Frazer: *The Golden Bough* (condensed), p. 20.

² D. S. Cairns: *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, pp. 22 f.

³ Miall Edwards: *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 47.

DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION

of religion have been attempted, offers the following : Religion is "man's faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability of life, and which he expresses in acts of worship and service." ¹

A few sentences may be given to each of these distinguishable aspects of the one organic enterprise that religion is. In the first place, religion is an address of the human spirit towards a particular object. This is "the supernatural." As Oman says, "the supernatural is the special concern of religion, and nothing else is concerned with it in the same way as religion." ² But there is no recognizable religion in which the supernatural is not God Himself or His personal equivalents, or that which owes its sacred character to His contact or presence. I am not unaware that Buddhism is stubbornly presented in this debate as a religion with no such object. But Buddhism did not become a religion until the East humanized it by developing divinities within it, among them the Lord Buddha himself. Buddhism was in its origin a rationalism apart from current religion, by which those who were prepared to exercise themselves in a philosophical discipline, whereby thought itself was in the end annihilated, might attain escape from existence itself. He was not concerned to provide a religion for the many, but a philosophical "way" for the elect. ³

In the second place, religion in commerce with its

¹ Galloway : *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 184.

² Oman : in *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 297.

³ See Sydney Cave : Essay on "Christianity in Relation to other Religions," in *The Future of Christianity*, pp. 7 ff., for a lucid summary of what Buddhism meant and what it has come to mean. cf. also Saunders : in *International Review of Missions*, 1917, p. 166 : "Buddhism allowed its excessive pessimism and its denial of God and of the soul to drop into the background, and found room for trust in God and for prayer."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

object is characterized by its own kind of spiritual activity ; as Oman says, nothing else is concerned with this object of its interest in the same way as is religion. There is certainly thought in its operation ; men believe in the existence of their gods and attempt to describe them. But the intensity of their attitude is not theoretic ; it is " rooted in imagination touched with emotion," as Pfeiderer reminded us, and that, emotion is composite of awe, reverence, fear, love, longing, surrender.

Again, the approach to God is felt to be so tremendous an adventure that from the first man has been altogether unequal to it except he issue to it and pass within it in the devout and fearful company of his fellows. In other words, religion is a communal engagement of the human spirit ; and this is the third of the distinguishable aspects of the one organic enterprise that religion is. This aspect of religion has been remarkably emphasized in recent days by those who consider that in origin and significance religion is altogether a social phenomenon.¹ Such theories have many vagaries ; but their central position is just, namely, that without a community there is no religion at all. " Magic " is the vocation of the individual in his jealous independence of his fellows ; but as Durkheim declares, " there is no Church of magic. . . . The magician has a clientele and not a Church. . . . Religion, on the other hand, is inseparable from the idea of a Church." ²

In the next place, there are entailed in this, rites and forms of worship of a communal character

¹ e.g. Wendt, Durkheim, etc.

² Durkheim : *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, pp. 44 f. Consult for a brilliant exhibition of the inherency and development of the social aspect of religion, Warde Fowler's *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*.

RELIGION AND ETHICAL SECRET OF JESUS

These are inevitable, and apart from these religion is a defective and ineffectual moodiness. There is no such thing as religion without an outward cult, whether it be assembled about concrete sacrifices as of old, or refined to the simple gathering of people for prayer and the singing of hymns to the accompaniment of that strangely sacrosanct abomination an American organ. Of old, writes Burkitt, "sacrifice was the normal form of everyone's worship, just as prayers and singing is now. New religions at the present day, whatever their principles, tend to adopt a singularly uniform cultus. From what I have heard of the Christian Scientists their meetings are indistinguishable in general from that of ordinary Protestant worship, viz. hymns and prayers and a sermon. I doubt if people in the early days of Christianity would have been satisfied with that. They wanted something more than philosophy and a frame of mind; they wanted action, something done." Even those prophets of Israel, who are applauded as the protagonists of "ethical religion," combined their revolt with an habitual response to the cult of their nation in so far as that, in their judgment, was faithful to the archaic traditions associated with the name of Moses. Their "central position," as Paterson defines it, "was that rites without righteousness are useless, but that they have a place and a use in ethical religion."¹

§ 3. *Is Religion, as thus explored, the ethical secret of Jesus?*

I have engaged you in this excursion on the nature of religion in order that we may the better judge of the validity of the customary dictum that religion is

¹ Paterson : *The Nature of Religion*, p. 399.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the source, the secret, and the regulation of the morality of Jesus. Can we say that it was religion, as thus properly outlined, on which he leaned as the support of his counsels for life, and to which he directed his disciples as the mainstay of their conduct? If it was so, then the religion which played this part can be looked for only in three definite directions: either in the prevalent religion of his nation; or in that religion refined by himself; or, in the third place, in a new revelation of religion provided by himself. I propose to enquire briefly into this by beginning with the third of these alternatives.

§§(1) *Contemporary rites and religious societies as affected by Jesus.*

Certainly in respect of two, at least, of the various aspects of religion with which our analysis was concerned, he showed no sign of a desire to substitute new for old. These have to do, first, with the matter of rights and ceremonies, and, second, with the constitution of a *religious* community. As regards the first of these, he was faithful and devoted to the holy rites and practices of the religion in which he had been nurtured. As we have already noted, he observed the feasts of his people's Church and was exemplary in fulfilling the customary devotions. On two occasions he arrested his own engagement in his mission, leaving his band of followers to pursue a programme he had set them in the interval, while he journeyed south to observe the great festivals in Jerusalem.¹ Oman, I feel, slurs over this loyalty of Jesus. He says that "though Jesus visited the synagogue and the temple," it cannot be said "that his religion had much to do with either"; and he

¹ See Moffatt: *Everyman's Life of Jesus*, p. 89.

RELIGION AS AFFECTED BY JESUS

indicates that his attitude is parallel to that of the prophets "who constantly declared that a religion marked only by the cult was mere profane trampling God's courts, and who made no attempt to replace the existing cult by a better, but declared that true religion was to do justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with one's God."² We shall admit gratefully the significance of the prophets' appeal against religion as a mere cult; but, as I have already suggested, the prophets were the last men in the world to proclaim that religion is exhausted in ethical conduct suffused with personal piety. And the same must be said of Jesus, who was so little indifferent to the cult, that the only occasion on which he capped his evangel with physical violence was created by his passionate love for the temple of his God (Mark xi, 15 ff.). I cannot picture Jesus frequenting the temple as he did and being found in the synagogues of the towns and villages with exact fidelity, and believe that "his religion had not much to do with either." The impression made upon us is not that of a spiritual aristocrat who gave the appearance of that fidelity towards the shrines and assemblies of his nation's Church, while all the time he was only tolerating them in contrast to an inner "religion" of his own; the impression is that of an Israelite who loved the habitation of God's house and whose heart was glad when he went up thereto.

Further, glimpses are allowed us in the Gospel records of his loyalty to the detailed observances of the normal piety. He observed the custom of "grace before meat" (Matt. xiv, 19; xv, 36; xxvi, 26). He repeated the *shema* (Mark xii, 29 f.). On his robe he bore the prescribed symbolic sign (Luke

² Oman: in *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 269.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

viii, 44). Certainly he made critical references to the practices of prayer and fasting as these were witnessed in certain quarters. But the reference was to exaggerated forms and developments of personal piety and his criticism was directed towards achieving their spiritual normality. He prescribed no devout practices or prayers such as were intended to rescind those in common use, in so far as these fulfilled their proper and intended purpose. It was only when so requested that he formulated a prayer for the use of his band of followers, even as John the Baptist had done for his. But there is no indication, either in his own practice or in that of his disciples, that the "Lord's Prayer" was to them a prayer-book that superseded their Church's "common prayers."

So little disposed was he to supplant the old religion, that, in the matter of its apparatus, with which we are at present engaged, he made no shift to supersede it with new rites or forms, but was content with these so long as these were practised with that inwardness which was their primary inspiration. Indeed it might be contended that something of the like contentment is discernible in his attitude to religions other than the Jewish. It is remarkable that no criticism of his has been preserved in which he shared the scorn which the bulk of his countrymen expressed for the temples and liturgics of the "heathen." His one criticism (that on the length of their prayers) was equally applicable to his own people. In his intercourse with those of another religion, he shows no sign of advocating the displacement of their own particular religious practice with anything new of his own or with the preferable practices of the Jews. It was in a different province, one in which the significance of religion is not the only concern, that

THE LORD'S SUPPER

he dealt with these, as in the case of the centurion of Capernaum (Matt. viii, 5 ff.). In the instance referred to, it was in the field of "faith" his heart and help went out to that man. But such "faith" was a flavour of spirit which is by no means to be limited to its religious references, or even to its engagement with God, but which, as we have already seen, was an attitude of spirit that Jesus himself exercised, and would fain have others exercise, in the whole comportment of man to all the divers interests of nature and life.

§§§ (a) *The "institution of the Lord's Supper."*

It will be said, of course, that Jesus did institute a new and dominating rite in what is known and profoundly revered as the Lord's Supper. But here again we must discriminate. For myself I do most fervently believe that the Lord's Supper is so great a creation that all rites, ceremonies, cults and priesthoods that the world ever contained might be swept from the earth and be well away, if only this mystery of the Incarnate Crucified remained. But we are occupied with the question as to whether in its origin it was intended by Jesus to be the substitute he would have them receive in room of former rituals now superseded; and I cannot believe this to have been its immediate significance at all. Certainly his followers maintained the practice which their master so dramatically instituted, but subsequently the disciples were as faithful as ever they had been in waiting upon the temple rituals and the customs of the synagogue worship. They continued, indeed, to fast in the manner Jesus had recommended, to pray in the words he had given them, and to break bread in their houses in pursuance

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

of the request he had made of them in that last Pass-over; but all this they did as a guild within the ancient religion which Jesus had honoured to the end.

§§§ (b) *Did he found a "religious" community?*

This leads us now to the question as to whether Jesus, in his presumed affurance of a "new religion," founded a new *religious* community. I have suggested that it was as a guild within the old religion that his band of chosen followers presented themselves. And yet that does not do justice to the purpose of Jesus in so assembling them. He had at once a lesser and also a larger end in view, than that word describes. I cannot feel that his plan went so far as to erect his apostolate as an *ecclesia in ecclesia*. In an appreciable way he took twelve men apart from the fluctuating number of those who attended him; but there is nothing in the records to suggest that he reduced his following to that tested group, as might a new Gideon in Israel, in order that, with this as a vital core, the new Church it represented would spread outwards again to remodel the ancient church upon its economy, and thereafter all the other religions of the world. That process of reduction was not an ecclesiastical policy; it was the preparation of what had the appearance of a forlorn hope. He was upholden in the period of declining popularity with the confidence that, in fulfilment of the tragical development which he came more and more to recognize his mission in life involved, he would emerge as conqueror over death, and in that triumph he perfected and liberated to carry on his mission. But his heart was appalled with the prospect that when he issued from the clouds of death he might

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

find no point of contact in the expectant and responsive hearts of men, no platform of recognition, no cellular group ready to be impregnated with his revived life. He must prepare for this. Hence his selection of a group of men, who, as he hoped, would be so won to his spirit and to some understanding of the destiny which he had come to see lay upon him, that they would come back to him when he came back to them ! But, on the other hand, he trusted that once they knew him again and were renewed in communion with his very life and spirit, they would fulfil the part of his Body in the earth, and be the vehicle of that secret which he had essayed to awaken in the hearts of men in Galilee in a springtime of hope which soon fell on wintry weather. This is what I meant by the larger end he had in view in the selection of the Twelve. Even so, it was more than a *religious* community he had thus in view. It was the *Embodiment of himself* he was set upon continuing in the earth ; and thereby he sought to awaken more and more deeply and widely in the world that secret of his spirit which had reference to religion indeed, but not to religion alone. Here I am touching matters which will occupy us more intimately anon.

Meantime I turn to those who will ask whether he was entirely satisfied with the old and whether he made no move towards adjusting it or refining it. The answer to this question has already been indicated. He appears certainly to have been satisfied with the apparatus of the religion in which he was himself brought up. But was he satisfied with the view that that religion took of the "object" of religion ? In this further aspect of the several aspects that cohere in the organic spiritual enterprise called religion, had he nothing new to contribute ?

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

§§ (2) *His relation to the theology of his time.*

Now, if this question refers to *theology*, the answer must be in the negative. I have already referred to the relation occupied by the *thought* of God in the mind of Jesus to that in the current belief of the better minds among his countrymen (page 51). Jesus was satisfied with the information they had about God. His dissatisfaction in that connection had to do with their blind and sluggish use and practice of the information they possessed; his amazement grew at their insensibility of soul within a revelation of the divine presence which was their traditional heritage and natural heritage as well. They knew, apart from his announcement, of the "fatherhood of God." Bishop Temple, writing of the convictions about God which the countrymen of Jesus possessed, says that he "presupposed these convictions: that God is exalted in a peerless unity high above all existing things; that His holiness consists chiefly in His perfect righteousness; that He is the Creator of the world, not only an indwelling Presence; that He cares for its course and Himself takes action to guide its History; that He watches over His people with a father's care, not only demanding but desiring their obedience." ¹

I consider that that is a just exhibition of the thought of God already lodged in the heart of Israel. Can it be said, then, that Jesus, in his teaching about God or in his descriptions of God, added materially to that doctrine? "It is a mistake," says Sabatier, "to think that Jesus introduced a new doctrine of God, His essence and attributes, and of the intra-divine life. His notion of God is that of the Old Testament.

¹ Temple: *Christ's Revelation of God*, p. 22.

JESUS AND THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

Even the idea of God as the Father is not new. The new thing here is the inward attitude.”¹

§§ (3) *His relation to the Religious Spirit of his time.*

I venture to think that this is said with true discernment. But how shall we interpret that “inward attitude” which Sabatier describes as “the new thing” in the bearing of Jesus to God? Does it mean a new contribution in connection with that remaining aspect of the several aspects we distinguished as inherent in the one organic enterprise of religion, namely, the kind of spiritual activity that characterises the commerce of the religious man with the object of his worshipping devotion? Here is the crucial point of this whole matter. The answer to that question is both Yea and Nay. On the one hand he had no new instructions to give his hearers as to the spirit in which they should exercise themselves *religiously* towards God. They already knew that “fear,” born of awe and reverence of the Holy One, which is due God even in His condescension towards them “like as a father pitying his children,” and which Jesus counselled them to maintain (Matt. x, 28). They already knew that “love” towards God which was one of the standard directions of their credal confession (Matt. xxii, 38). These are the two poles of the emotion of address in all religion. On the other hand, Jesus brought to bear upon that reality which is in all things the representation of the presence of God the Father, an “inward attitude” which was veritably “new.” It involved a knowledge of God which was both wider and more intimate than the knowledge that is mediated by religion. Behind the knowledge of God which Jesus was

¹ Sabatier : *Religions of Authority*, etc., p. 297.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

content to accept from the religion of his fathers as religiously adequate, he was possessed of an awareness of the divine as love, goodness, truth and beauty, not merely in its bearing on human nature but on all created things,¹ which was of the character of a revelation.

It was this *spirit*, and not religion in itself, either old or new, that he was fervently desirous of begetting or, rather, reviving in the hearts of men. Could this be achieved, religion might be allowed almost to look after itself. I have emphasized his loyalty to the religion of his fathers and his expectation that his followers should show a like fidelity. At the same time, his engrossment with the spirit of which I speak was so passionate, and so occupied the heart of his missionary purpose, that he sometimes gives the impression of an almost casual regard towards religion and a certain indifference towards those problems of particular religious observances which occupied the minds of his countrymen in their many controversies. We feel this in his treatment of such practices as fasting and in that of the substance of prayer. He almost implies that he hardly cares whether they fast or not, or in what particular manner they fast; in one notable speech (Matt. vii, 7) he leaves the question of the substance of prayer almost at a loose end. All such questions, we feel, will resolve themselves, if only his followers possess and are possessed by a certain spirit in their hearts.

Again we are confronted with the question as to what precisely this *spirit* was; but we have now done

¹ cf. Temple: *Christ's Revelation of God*, p. 30, for the "sense" Jesus had of "the intimate relation between the Natural and the Moral Law"; and Wendt: *The Teaching of Jesus*, Vol. II, p. 384.

FURTHER SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION

something towards tracing it further by the conclusion we have reached that it is not to be identified solely with religion. It is difficult to hold firmly to this conclusion because of the customary gravitation of our thoughts toward religion as the ultimate source and explanation of *all* the spiritual interests and activities of man. I think we would do well to linger further on this matter, to clarify our appreciation of the place of religion in life, and thus to see, more definitely still, that religion, as an identifiable enterprise, is but one of the several fields in which man deals with reality, and not that vague continent, as many think it to be, of which morality, art, and the rest, are but included provinces. I trust you will not be unduly impatient that we thus seem to turn aside again on what may at first appear another tangent. I venture to surmise that, as a result of this further enquiry, we may approach with surprising intimacy that secret of the ethical wisdom of Jesus which is our quest.

§ 4. *Further consideration of the significance of Religion.*

It may seem a strange thing, in view of that dominant philosophical tradition which traces to Kant and which gathered so great and extensive a vogue in the Idealism that gathered to Hegel, to contend for the independence from religion of ethics, science, and æsthetics. But religion in its own independence has been so proudly re-established that it is almost an axiom with certain to-day that the spiritual activities just mentioned are devoid of perspective and lack their due significance unless subsumed under religion, or, at least, amplified by the spirit in which religion is understood to encompass the ultimate of reality.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

§§ (1) *Religion as an independent spiritual interest.*

We have already noted how, through the gallant advocacy of Schleiermacher, religion regained an independent status long endangered or even denied by an imperious metaphysic. He concedes to science and philosophy a distinctive realm, and similarly to morality, and recognizes that these two activities proceed to a valid apprehension, within limits, of reality, and that they are properly sustained by the assurance that they are in contact with the Absolute. But it is by religion and the particular "feeling" with which religion is informed, that the spirit of man attains a completed sense of being in contact, nay, in communion with the reality behind and within the material and moral world.

This contention for the independence of religion, and its distinctive and superlative quality, was both modified and developed by many successors of this great and creative thinker. Schleiermacher in his devotion to "feeling," as the means of the final apprehension of reality, was, as we have already noted, by no means insensible to the virtue and validity, within inevitable limits, of philosophy; his "appeal to experience was supplemented by a carefully thought-out philosophy."¹ Such an one as Hermann conceded that the *firmest* attainment of reality is secured by the feeling that constitutes the religious life, but he saluted the moral and intellectual activities as themselves achieving a grasp of reality. But Ritschl would have no relatedness between knowledge of the theoretic kind and religion. He asserted a complete severance between them: "religion and theoretical

¹ See R. S. Franks: in Essay on "The Present Relations between Philosophy and Theology," in *The Future of Christianity*, p. 55, for a wholesome reminder of this.

OTTO

knowledge," he declares, "are different functions of spirit." The attempt of metaphysic to reach and explicate the being and nature of God is an illegitimate attempt. It is only in the religious consciousness that this is possible; and therein it is secured not by any process that can in any way be regarded as intellectual; it is *given* us—"in religion the thought of God is given."¹

§§§ (a) *Rudolf Otto.*

At the present time the influence of Schleiermacher has flowered most notably in Rudolf Otto, whose *The Idea of the Holy* is regarded by many as an epoch-making book. He is in several respects sharply critical of Schleiermacher, but the plea of the latter for the independence and uniqueness of religion has received in Otto an enlargement and an enrichment, by means of psychological research, which are almost phenomenal. Otto, while recognizing the value, as of a discovery, of Schleiermacher's "feeling of dependence," removes from it² by affirming that his predecessor has not done justice to the distinctively religious character of that feeling. It is of a kind by itself; it is "perfectly *sui generis*, and irreducible to any other; and therefore, like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined."³ It is primary just as that which emerges in contact with goodness is primary, or as that which is similarly engaged with truth, or as that which is similarly engaged with beauty. It is compounded of awe and devout responsiveness, and must not be subjected,

¹ Ritschl: *Justification and Reconciliation*, I, p. 17.

² Otto: *The Idea of the Holy*, pp. 8 ff.

³ Otto: *ut sup.*, p. 7.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

by way of definition, to intellectual, moral or æsthetical interpretations. It is that within the soul of man which has to do with an aspect of reality that is not exhausted in what is known as the eternal values, truth, goodness and beauty. Its province, so to speak, is the "Holy," which is God as *tremendum et fascinans*, an "entirely other" from the Being we have been accustomed to try to define exhaustively by those three-fold categories. There is that in God which does not yield to such precise and manageable terms as reason, goodness or beauty. It is, as it were, a non-rational and non-ethical phase, to which Otto gives the name of *numinous*; and it corresponds to that kindred *numinous* address of our souls which is the unique attitude of religion. "That which the primitive religious consciousness first apprehended in the form of 'dæmonic dread'," says Otto, "and which, as it further unfolds, becomes more elevated and ennobled, is in origin not something rational or moral, but something distinct, non-rational, an object to which the mind responds in a unique way with the special feeling-reflexes that have been described."¹

There are gaps in Otto's presentation of his theory into which many have plunged with triumphant criticisms; these are chiefly his conception of the God of religion as "wholly other," and the idea that religion is primarily of a "non-rational" character. But the virtue of his contribution to the study of religion outweighs its defects by far. It is all to the good, for example, to have that element of "awe" restored to our notion of religion, which is greatly lost sight of in that nerveless evangelism which proclaims a love of God that is mere sloppy sentimentality.

¹ Otto: *ut sup.*, p. 113.

A FOURTH VALUE

To-day's exposition of religion is for the most part in charge of men in cities, who are comparatively little in contact with the austere silences and the "tremendous" manifestations of Nature; and even the informed and imaginative mind is affected by that confidence in the artificial environment by which reverence and purifying fear have withered in the souls of those to whom the ant-heap of their township exhausts the significance of the world. I surmise that many very comfortable and soothing doctrines that are issued as adequate to the mystery that religion is, would assume another temper if composed in the vicinity of Loch Coruisk or in the chart-house of the ship on which Melville launched Captain Ahab on his monstrous quest. In such circumstances, the little God of a domestic benevolence vanishes in the scornful impatience of those who have seen the wonders of the great deep and the dreadful places of the earth or the abyss of the heavens.¹

§§§ (b) *Religion as engaged with a "fourth value."*

With Otto the sphere of religion is one in which the philosophical mind is immersed in experiences which baffle the categories of theoretic reason, and equally so those of morality, and almost as fully those of the artistic response to reality. The object of religion is as distinctively and definitely *sui generis*, as that value we name Truth with which science and philosophy are engaged, as that value we name Goodness with which morality is engaged, as that value of

¹ "It is the consciousness of the background of life, this power of making us feel the great currents on which mankind is swept along, that Æschylus has no rival. His sense of the unseen makes him a little unintelligible and uncongenial to our scientific and critical age, which easily forgets the mystery of nature because it has a superficial control over her. We prefer Euripides who is a rationalist like ourselves."—R. W. Livingstone, in *The Pageant of Greece*, p. 111.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Beauty which is the specific concern of art.¹ This, it is clear, involves the recognition of *the Holy as a fourth value*, to be added to those hitherto recognized, namely, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. I propose to proceed on the basis of this discovery. "In the religions of the world, which from an external point of view may be regarded as social or cultural products," says Franks, "yet another value appears besides the True, the Good and the Beautiful, namely, the Holy, the idea of a supernatural life or of communion with God."²

This establishment of the Holy as a fourth value is challenged of course, e.g. by Inge,³ Otto himself is not insensible to the way in which ethical, rational and æsthetical elements come to have a certain connection with his distinctively religious value; but his whole argument is directed against any view of the significance of religion which makes it either a kind of court of appeal or clearing-house for the three-fold spiritual activities of man, or a kind of suffusive atmosphere in and about them of a "mystical" character. If we are persuaded by Otto that the Holy is a value in its own right, so to speak, the question for us is rather this: Is the Holy of equal, but of no more than equal, dignity as compared with the others, or does it occupy some kind of dominant place among them? There are those like Volkelt who hold that

¹ cf. Bouisset: *What is Religion*, p. 11: "Attempts have been made to derive religion from the instinct for knowledge; to consider it 'the instinctive thought,' the elementary stage of true philosophic thought; to degrade it to an æsthetic illusion; or to accept its propositions as postulates for the basis of ethics. Opposed to this is the view that in religion we are dealing with a powerful primary manifestation of human personality, derived from nothing, not to be reduced to one of the categories belonging to man's mental life, such as thinking, feeling, willing, but a phenomenon standing by itself."

² Franks: in *The Future of Christianity*, p. 66.

³ See his *Science and Ultimate Truth* (Fison Lecture, 1926), p. 10.

RELIGION AS ULTIMATE

the four values constitute an economy of co-equal and co-eternal values ; others (Dunkermann, Munsterberg)¹ consider that in that of religion we have the principle which is the bond and conservation of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. This latter interpretation is in the line of Schleiermacher's judgment. It is akin the position occupied by Oman in his debate of the relation of the values to one another. He is insistent that religion has its own distinctive sphere of interest and its own specific approach to reality.² He asserts, indeed, that "religion is not a mere combination" of those distinctive spheres in which science, morality and art operate ; but, in the same sentence he announces that religion is not "something merely alongside them." Nay, he proceeds, "we cannot separate true thinking, feeling, and acting from religion without losing the absolute worth by which alone they can be valued."³ Is religion, then, I ask, with its particular interest and appraisal of reality, primary ? Is it that to which all else that engages man's soul must bow in the end ? And, if so, is not this prerogative based on the historical primacy of religion ? It is to this conclusion that Franks comes in his remarkable essay on "The Present Relations between Philosophy and Theology." He says, "The truth seems to be that in the beginning religion is the matrix out of which all the values develop. We see this plainly in the history of Greece : Greek religion was before either Greek science or Greek art or Greek ethics. But even when the different values have assumed their relative independence, and the True, the

¹ For references to Volkelt, Dunkermann and Munsterberg, see Franks, *op. cit.*, p. 66 n.

² Oman : *op. cit.*, p. 264.

³ Oman : *op. cit.*, p. 296.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Beautiful, the Good and the Holy are all discriminated, religion in some way retains a touch of the original wholeness out of which all sprang.”¹

§§ (2) *Religion as one issue (with three others) of an “original wholeness” of spirit.*

With regard to this, I cannot quite make out how these two pronouncements are related to each other, namely, “Religion is the matrix out of which all the values develop,” and “Religion in some way retains a touch of the original wholeness out of which all sprang.” What was that “original wholeness?” Was it religion, or was it something out of which the discriminated activities of the human spirit all sprang—I mean all *four* of them? If the latter, then religion itself cannot be called “the matrix out of which all the values develop.” The matrix must be something anterior to religion, either historically or ideally. Further, are we to understand that while “religion in some way retains a touch of the original wholeness,” this retention is looked for in vain in ethics, science and æsthetics? This cannot be maintained, because it is widely agreed that, as Schleiermacher held, these are all inspired with the conviction that they are in touch with the Absolute, and they pursue their quest as activities that are set upon achieving cosmical conclusions. Must we not say that not only religion, but ethics, science and æsthetics, as well, “in some way retain a touch of the original wholeness out of which all sprang?” And if so, what shall we now make of the view that religion is that spiritual wholeness? The fact is, I cannot detect anywhere, either in history or ideally, that religion which is erected by many as the original

¹ Franks : in *The Future of Christianity*, pp. 66 f.

AN ORIGINAL WHOLENESS OF SPIRIT

wholeness from which those other spiritual enterprises are derived, and to which they must return as to a centre whence they issued at first and in which they must continue to cohere as radii of a circle. It may be that religion has retained more of the "original wholeness," or retained its "touch" more vividly, than have the other spiritualities; thus we may agree, by underlining one word in it, with the following statement of Franks—"Only an imaginative world-view conceived in the *spirit* of religion can ever hope to interpret the whole."¹ But I propose to hold fast to the view that while religion has its independence, so likewise have the other spiritual concerns of man, and that, while religion is addressed to the whole, so are the others; and to submit that the only legitimate interpretation of their relations with one another is to pre-suppose that the matrix from which all the values (the Holy included) developed, was an address on the part of the spirit of man that was characterized by a "wholeness," in which religion was no more "discriminated" at first than ethics, science, or æsthetics.

This is certainly an elusive conception, and we may very well feel baffled if asked to indicate where, if anywhere, in human experience it can be exhibited as operative. Nevertheless, it has been felt after by certain students of these mysteries, and they have sought to explore it. Troeltsch, for example, and Otto himself have thus adventured.²

The soul of man must be regarded as a whole, and whatever issues within it must be involved in the whole that it is. The image we have reached concerning

¹ Franks : *loc. cit.*, p. 69.

² See Troeltsch : quoted in Paterson, *The Nature of Religion*, p. 169 ; Otto : *The Idea of the Holy*, pp. 117 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

it goes back to a primary unitive disposition towards reality of the soul in its wholeness, in which there are four *nuclei*; and these, in the course of the particularization of its attention to reality and of its discernment of the great constituent aspects of our environment and of its response thereto, develop their several inherent activities and the peculiar quality of that activity in each case, and become recognizable as the spiritual engagements we entitle religion, science, ethics, and æsthetics, all of which are independent, but only as the divers members of a living organism are independent, the communal life of the organism in this case being that unitive awareness of reality which is the source and substratum of all the four.

I proceed, then, on the understanding that, ideally or logically, there was a period in early human history at which the movements and spiritual provinces which became religion, science, morality, and art, were an undifferentiated address and response to reality, a general awareness within which those inherent *nuclei* of interest in the world were involved which issued in the four particular enterprises just mentioned. But, as regards this awareness, let us no longer image it as a diffusive and potential religiousness, which then became religion, and *then* remitted certain of its interests to certain of its own internal modes and launched them on their own as ethics, science and art. It will not do to say that "in the most primitive societies religion was not differentiated from other interests or activities, such as magic, primitive industry, art, law, social organization, morality,"¹ (all of which is a just statement), and then to treat the emergence of these interests and activities as taking place *within*

¹ Miall Edwards : *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 157.

THE SEPARATION OF RELIGION

a primary religion regarded as co-extensive with man's whole interest in the world. Religion became concrete and recognizable as religion, with the same kind of differentiation as did the other interests and activities; that is to say, it was one more radius from the heart of the undifferentiated awareness which I have already described. That "heart" was neither thought nor any feeling of obligation or awe or charm—none of these in any *particularized* form, but all of these as one interfused apprehension of reality, alarm at it, and, at the same time, a yearning nestling in unto it. Religion, as T. B. Strong says, is with early man "a primary and necessary element in his reaction to his environment," and so are those elements, he continues, which "express themselves later as philosophy, art, and ethics. At the earliest stage it would appear that these elements are not distinct but fused, and they become separated as reflection grows." He agrees that religion "becomes separated out" in that "numinous sense" which he is agreeable to borrow as a term from Otto, as sufficiently descriptive of the distinctively religious mode in the human spirit.¹ Tiele in his *Elements of the Science of Religion*, in dealing with the origin of the religious principle, removes himself with a certain scorn from that jungle of anthropological studies in dreams, ghosts, and the like, wherein many cannot see the wood for the trees, both golden boughs and boughs rotten with fungus, and declares that "it was not childish dreams that gave rise to that faith which has proved so stupendous a power in the world's history." What was it, then? "It was," he answers, "man's original, unconscious, innate sense of infinity that gave rise to his first stammering utterances of

¹ Strong: *Religion, Philosophy and History*, pp. v, 20.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

that sense, and to all his beautiful dreams of the past and of the future.”¹ That is finely said. But, I would respectfully submit, it tends to foreshorten the movement, it abbreviates it by one stage. That primary awareness, with its quality of “infinity,” “original and unconscious,” and, as Tiele further describes it in the same place, “instinctive or innate, an original and unconscious form of thought,” did not exhaust itself by concentration in that which we term religion. It radiated religion; but it also radiated ethics, art, and science; and these likewise retain, in their impulse and also in the ambition of their several quests, the quality of “infinity” which they and religion carried on from their common source.

¹Tiele: *The Elements of the Science of Religion*, p. 30.

PART THREE

CHAPTER III

“ PIETY ”

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. <i>An effort to locate the "original wholeness" of spirit</i>	343
(1) <i>It may be traceable historically as Aidos</i>	343
(2) <i>It may be traceable anthropologically</i>	344
(a) <i>Marett and the spirit of primitive man</i>	346
(b) <i>Andrew Lang and "primitive monotheism"</i>	347
(c) <i>The belief in a "golden age"</i>	348
(d) <i>Modern anthropology and the "golden age"</i>	350
(3) <i>"Piety," a convenient name for the unitary address of man's spirit to reality</i>	353
(a) <i>"Piety," derivation and description</i>	354
(b) <i>"Piety," illustrated in W. H. Hudson</i>	354
•	
2. <i>The differentiation of "Piety"</i>	357
(1) <i>The emergence of religion, morality, thought, art.</i>	357
(2) <i>The differentiation was inevitable, but perilous</i>	359
(3) <i>Mankind's longing to recover the lost harmony.</i>	360

CHAPTER III

“PIETY”

§ 1. *An effort to locate the “original wholeness” of spirit.*

We shall be asked if anywhere, as a result of historical or anthropological research, that phase of the human spirit, which I described at the close of the preceding chapter, can be exhibited in actuality—this pre-religious and pre-scientific disposition of man’s soul to reality, of the undifferentiated but unitive character which we are advancing.

§§ (1) *It may be traceable historically as Aidos.*

As regards the *historical field*, I would refer, for answer, to the consideration given by such as Pfeleiderer and Gilbert Murray to the conception of *Aidos* among the Greeks.¹ This is certainly a very elusive notion. It trails with it clouds of that indeterminate dawn in which the spirit of man awoke to reality. Pfeleiderer considers that in *Aidos* is to be found “the common source of religion and morality,” among the Greeks.² He endeavours to distinguish its various notes by enumerating such emotions and movements within it as fear, but the fear that is couched in humility, reverence, righteousness, insight,

¹ See Pfeleiderer: *Philosophy of Religion*,^c Vol. IV, pp. 240 ff.; and Gilbert Murray: *Rise of the Greek Epic*, pp. 81 ff.

² Pfeleiderer: *op. cit.*, p. 240.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

reverence, love. Its objects are "the gods and magistrates, moral orders and duties, parents and old men, the unfortunate and those in need of help ; indeed the young man when alone is to feel *Aidos* even for himself, and to represent to himself the image of *Aidos*, as is often required of him." Gilbert Murray secures a like connotation of the word.¹ Both Pfeiderer and Murray perceive in the bearing of *Aidos* upon our relation to the stranger and the helpless the incipient concern of morality. Murray sees in it "the counterpart of what we, in our modern and scientific prose, call 'a sense of social responsibility' or the like." And Pfeiderer, in the same reference, and also in connection with a man's feeling *Aidos* for himself, detects in these "the moral feeling of respect for human dignity." We may readily savour also the discrimination in *Aidos* of that which becomes religion. And I think that a little reflection will yield to us more than a vague detection of the emergence of science and art as well : *Aidos* towards the vesture of Nature yields the latter, while the former issues from *Aidos* for Nature's workings.

§§ (2) *It may be traceable anthropologically.*

Other enquirers have revealed to us something very like the functioning of this primitive and undifferentiated attitude to reality, as a result of their *anthropological* researches. Man at first fared badly as a result of those adventurous enquiries. Researchers in remote parts of the earth announced that they had actually come across the primitive human, and found him to be a brutal creature, gross

¹ Murray : *op. cit.*, p. 86.

PRIMITIVE MAN

in belief and practice, immersed in customs so primitively base and muddled that it was felt necessary to treat all Edens, Biblical or Voltairean, as the veriest mythology.

This impact was so forcible that the antique belief in any kind of Adam and Eve might very well be regarded as altogether beneath our notice now ; and this had been the result, were it not that the anthropologists took to quarrelling among themselves, and plain men, hearing such sounds in the high schools, or, if you will, within the depths of the jungle, have not been quite so impressed by that overturn of old beliefs as presumably they ought to be. And not only plain men, but brilliant interlopers in the science like Andrew Lang, have " taken heart of grace " and regard the contradictory judgments of the olympians as by no means delphic in finality. Man has been put through the mill by magicists, fetichists, totemists, animists, and others, and, although he is well-nigh torn to pieces in the scramble, his secret is almost as great a secret as ever it was. In general, however, it was very widely agreed to think of man at the first as engaging with nature, his fellows and all things, with the inchoate conviction that all was alive and personalized. Out of this diffusive conviction developed his various spiritual engagements with reality. But a still remoter stage has been surmised. This is a " pre-animistic " phase in human development, in which man is thought to have been, in some fashion, conscious of a pervasive force through all things, an impersonal power which evinces a particular lodgment in certain things and persons. This is *mana*. The term is a Melanesian term made current by Codrington as a result of his anthropological researches, and now enshrined as something

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

like the ultimate category in religious origins by Marett.

§§§ (a) *Marett and the spirit of primitive man.*

Mana, according to Marett, is "supernatural power, differing in intensity—in voltage, so to speak—but never in essence . . . and whilst fully adapted to express the immaterial—the unseen force at work behind the seen—yet, conformably with the incoherent state of rudimentary reflection, leaves in solution the distinction between personal and impersonal."¹ It "can come very near to meaning 'soul' or 'spirit'"; but Marett thinks that it "always falls short of expressing 'individuality'."² Although Marett hesitates now to say as sharply as he once suggested that this awareness is anterior to that engagement of primitive man with reality which is labelled animism, he is "ready to assume that, before animism, regarded as an ideal system of religious beliefs, can have come into its kingdom, there must have been numberless dimly-lighted impressions of the awful that owned no master in the shape of some one systematizing thought."³

Marett considers that such theories as his have "come to stay"; indeed, that "the flowing tide is with us."⁴ But the flowing tide is visiting creeks and stirring ancient theories which had come to be regarded as backwaters and old hulks in anthropological interest; and these are spreading themselves again with a new confidence. I refer to the views in general, and to those of Andrew Lang and Father Schmidt in particular, which postulate a period in human origins in which man was well aware of the spiritual

¹ Marett: *The Threshold of Religion* (3rd Ed.), p. 119.

² *ut sup.*, p. 118.

³ *ut sup.*, pp. xiii, xii.

⁴ *ut sup.*, p. x.

PRIMITIVE MONOTHEISM

constitution of reality, and from which he declined in his apprehension of that vague but real conviction.

§§§ (b) *Andrew Lang and "primitive monotheism."*

The reference to Andrew Lang recalls that versatile paladin's courageous maintenance of a "primitive monotheism" as the primary suffusion of man's spirit at the first. The relative passages in his books are now much quoted.¹ They have not been duly regarded by anthropologists, although there are signs that this neglect is being amended. Malinowski, for example, considers that this view deserves a new attention. He interprets the neglect as due to the preconceived idea—an unscientific attitude—"that 'origins' must be very crude and simple and different from the 'developed forms,' or else the notion that the 'savage' or 'primitive' is really savage and primitive!" He refers in this to Lang's contentions, and also to the up-to-date researches of Father Schmidt, who, he says, "has adduced much evidence proving that this belief [in an All-Father] is universal among all the peoples of the simplest cultures and that it cannot be discarded as an irrelevant fragment of mythology, still less as an echo of missionary teaching. It looks, according to Pater Schmidt, very much like an indication of a simple and pure form of early monotheism."²

Lang and Schmidt are careful to qualify such phrases as "early monotheism" or "primitive monotheism." Lang, for example, says that it is "something which we cannot exactly call monotheism, yet which tends in that direction." The implication is

¹ A. Lang: *The Making of Religion* (1898), pp. 226, 238, 293. See especially chapters ix-xv.

² Malinowski: in *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 26.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

that before "animism," and as the explanation of *mana*, man sensed, or as it may be, had revealed to him, an information of his environment by a superlative and "spiritual" Presence, not such as we may entitle "God" as monotheistic religions have come to define Him, but at the same time a ground of coherency in reality which satisfied primitive man in that wholeness of his response to the whole, which subsequently came to be differentiated and divided as the interests that took shape in religion, morality, æsthetic and knowledge. It may be represented as a response to reality of complete simplicity, childlike in character, and reached either by that wondering abruptness which would mark it, if, as certain still think possible, a "revelation" was vouchsafed man by God, or by a gradual dawn of soul in man which, at length, so lighted him within, that, in that light, he beheld one indeterminate sunshine in all the world.

§§§ (c) *The belief in a "golden age."*

Certainly there obtained in the ancient world a lingering and pathetic conviction that some such "golden age" was once prevalent in the earth. It is the fashion, of course, to interpret that dream on the principle of reverted ideals, by which is meant that, here as elsewhere, man not only idealizes the past, but has the trick of pushing his dreams of the future beyond the globe of experience until they come round behind him and appear as a condition of life from which he has lapsed. But the conception of a "golden age" is not so readily dismissed. It must come to terms with the reasoned belief of such an one as Sir W. M. Ramsay, who maintains that the view, practically universal in the ancient world, was that

THE GOLDEN AGE

“the Golden Age lay in the beginning and every subsequent period was a step further down from the primitive period of goodness, happiness and sympathy with the Divine nature. . . . A feeling like this cannot safely be set aside as false. It must be explained; and the only explanation is that it arose from the universal perception of the fact that the history of the Mediterranean world was a story of degeneration and decay.”¹

Truly, it may be argued that there must have been a period in human development when, however vaguely and even, as we may say, stolidly, man regarded the world with an undifferentiated spiritualism, his attention was “synoptic”—if we may use a term so modernly significant. At any rate, it was an attention of “wholeness”; and spiritual peace and felicity are the characteristics of all such attentions, ancient or modern. The picture among the Greeks was that of a pastoral liberty and joy; the Babylonians, Hebrews, and others pictured it as a garden, a spacious park. The distant dream is that of a condition of life in which man moved among the creatures of earth as his kin, aware of himself as in a company dependent in common upon ready providences, and conscious in a suffusive way of a benevolence above him as wide as the sky, broad and unifying as the light and warmth of the sun, and yet informed with the calm fearfulness of cloud, darkness and fire.

I am fully aware how vague and fanciful all this may be judged by many. And yet one may be prepared to make it vaguer still by urging that this primitive address of man must not be so defined as

¹ W. M. Ramsay: *The Cities of St. Paul*, p. 30. See also pp. 23 ff., 44, 52 ff.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

to be identified with that "primitive monotheism," with all its qualifications, which is suggested by such as Lang, Schmidt and Ramsay. The title is a perilous one ; it is really applicable only to such a later period as that in which the spirit of man passed to the slowly differentiated engagement with reality wherein religion, morality, and the rest, came to acquire at length a relative independence of one another. We must beware, therefore, of interpreting the longing of the ancients for the "golden age" as a yearning for a "forgotten monotheism." It was a remoter quest. It harked back, with a fervour confused with later thoughts of God that were not the pristine experience of the race, to a time when the general world was one sunny brotherhood to the one spirit of man, in which he moved with his child-like spirit, suffused, at the most, with a sense, affectionate, and yet not altogether unfeared, of the fatherly or motherly domesticity of the whole.

§§§ (d) *Modern anthropology and the "golden age."*

I should do more than hesitate to advance such fumbling efforts to envisage a phase in the history of the human spirit, which may be dismissed out of hand as quite fanciful, were it not that certain anthropologists are making bold to revive, on scientific grounds, the historical validity of that dream of the ancients which hungered after a "golden age" in the immemorial experience of the human race. The men I refer to are such as W. J. Perry and G. Elliot Smith. A compendious survey of their positions may be conveniently found in Elliot Smith's "Conway Memorial Lecture" (March 17, 1927) and published in a booklet with the title *Human Nature* (Watts and Co.), But attention should be given to fuller

ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE GOLDEN AGE

expositions on his part and that of others, of the theory maintained.¹

The main line taken by Elliot Smith is this : that a just and open-minded attention to the character and manners of many existent "savage" tribes makes it more than difficult to "refuse to accept Hesiod's story of the former Golden Age of Peace and Happiness as essentially true. Natural Man is revealed to us as a merry and good-natured fellow, honest and considerate, chaste and peaceful. . . . He is a naked, harmless, truthful, overgrown child, kind-hearted, but quick and able to defend himself and to stop quarrelling among his fellows." ² The field of enquiry from which such conclusions are drawn is very extensive and varied in environment. Large sections of it have been investigated by enquirers whose bias is altogether towards a picture of primitive man as animalistic, lustful, pugnacious and predatory, and yet who, in the course of their researches, have come upon traits in him which "surprised" them and shook the confidence they had in that customary view. Elliot Smith seeks to make that unsettlement complete. He arrays their expressions of surprise. In their reports, he remarks, "such phrases as 'extremely courteous and merry'; 'in the main they have retained the old virtues of truthfulness, chastity, and courtesy'; 'each readily helps all other members of his own community and shares any game he may kill or honey he may take with the rest'; 'they are strictly monogamous and exhibit

¹ See, in particular, Perry's *Children of the Sun* (Methuen) and his *Growth of Civilization* (Methuen), and Elliot Smith's works, of which a list is given in Perry's *Children of the Sun*, pp. 522 f. Reference should be made, also, to Hose's *Natural Man* (1926), and Hose and McDougall's *Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1911).

² Elliot Smith: *Human Nature*, p. 30.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

great marital fidelity'; 'in every respect the women appear to be treated as the equals of men—they eat the same food; indeed, when we gave presents of food the men seemed usually to give the women and children their share first'; 'they are affectionate and indulgent parents,' occur with such monotonous regularity in the accounts of these widely scattered peoples that one is compelled to regard such amiable traits as the original attributes of the whole human family."¹ He considers that, as a result of such facts we are "justified in assuming that they exhibit the original innate qualities of mankind."

The original period of human simplicity, peace, and felicity, of which the above are the amazing relics, was broken up by the advent of "civilization," by which is meant the discovery and development of the arts of agriculture. "There are reasons for believing," we are told, "that men were, on the whole, peaceful and happy until the device of agriculture was invented, and the phase of culture which Mr. Perry calls 'food production' (in contradistinction to the Golden Age of 'food gathering') began."² But we need not concern ourselves with this side of the theory. We are content to know that, in the judgment of those who have reached these and the like convictions as to the disposition and conduct of "natural man," the human race, at the first, was of that character which consorts with the antique conception of a "golden age." The ultimate picture afforded us is that which Elliot Smith gives as a summary of the mind and manners of the Punans of Borneo: "These are truly primitive people—peaceful, happy, good-natured, faithful and kind to their wives, and indulgent and considerate to their

¹ Elliot Smith: *Human Nature*, p. 28 f.

² *ut sup.*, pp. 33 f.

children ; they have a natural sense of right and justice, are truthful and honest. Having no property, they are free from the temptation of greed and envy. Being on terms of equality with their fellows, causes of jealousy are rare. But they are quick and able to resent injury or injustice." ¹

§§ (3) "*Piety,*" a convenient name for the unitary address of man's spirit to reality.

I have now completed my effort to answer the question as to whether, historically and anthropologically, there can be exhibited that phase of the human spirit, that primary disposition of man's soul to reality, of a unitive character, which held within it the seeds of those interests and activities that developed their own quasi-independence as religion, morality, knowledge, and art, and held man in a communion with all Nature which was simple, harmonious and child-like. As a result of our enquiry, it is open to us to maintain the reasonableness of such a conception of man's earliest address to reality, and to picture it as not inappositely described in terms of an original "golden age."

It were well, if only for convenience of nomenclature, if we could give ourselves some word or summary phrase whereby to recognize readily, as we proceed, that earliest apprehension by man of his general environment and his intercourse with it. We shall decline now to call it "religion," no matter what qualifications we may attach to the word. There was, indeed, religion in it ; but there were the other three interests as well, all of them active in the one spiritual process and engagement, potentialities which, from a fusion of address, gradually developed each

¹ Elliot Smith : *Human Nature*, pp. 26 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

its own specific response to those decipherable aspects of reality which we entitle the four final spiritual values. As to the convenient term thus desired, we might take a word which we have already seen to be concerned with the frame of spirit with which we are engaged. I refer to *aidos*. Or may I suggest that we make the use that we require, of the word *pietas*?

§§§ (a) "*Piety*" : *derivation and description*.

Of man's abstract terms, this is as ancient and primitive as any; and it carried even in "classical" times indications of a connotation as extensive as the whole variety of man's spiritual interests. It was used to denote the attitude of reverence and dutifulness towards the gods, and again the disposition and practice of dutifulness, loyalty, gratitude, affection, love, towards one's relations, benefactors, and country, and, in general, the spiritual bearing of gentleness, kindness, tenderness, pity, compassion. Such varieties of disposition as are thus connoted in this one word point back, it is clear, to a stage in which the due attitude to the divine, and nature, and man, is of an undifferentiated kind. Certainly that disposition is in it which became recognizably religion. And the same may be said of morality.¹ But, without much labour, it might be maintained that knowledge and art, as well, are involved in that same bearing of reverence (even with its flavour of fearful wonder), gentleness, love, and the like, without which, as the

¹ Pfeiderer is assured of this. "In the feeling of 'piety,'" he says, "the sentiment of mingled awe, respect, and confidence to the head of the family, lie the roots of the moral consciousness, of social obligation and duty." But he considers that it is the same feeling which lies at the roots of religion. It is the same "mixture of fear, reverence, confidence, and sympathy which is exemplified in the fundamental social relation, that of the family." This feeling of "piety," he declares, is to be taken as "the common source of religion and morality."—Pfeiderer: *The Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. IV, pp. 225, 228, 240.

observant student of science and art recognizes, the secrets of Nature's behaviour and beauty remain a sealed and unilluminated book.

Accordingly, I propose that we should requisition this word *pietas* or *piety* as a convenient title for that primary address and communion, on man's part, towards his environment, in which his interests in reality were still fused in one commerce, and out of which, as from four inherent *nuclei* in it, in his developing inter-action with the gradually detectable "values" in reality, there emerged those specific engagements of his spirit we call religion, morality, knowledge and art.

§§§ (b) "*Piety*" illustrated in W. H. Hudson.

This *Piety*, then, ideally pre-supposed by us and, in an appreciable measure, historically discerned, developed by means of differentiation along the lines and the specific directions that are now familiarly known to us. Such a process is invo'ved both biologically and psychologically in the nature of things. The precise manner of the process in this case is beyond our knowledge. It would require an effort of intuitive imagination of which, we may agree, no one is capable, to invest our spirit in that apprehension of reality and communion with it which we have elected to call the age of *Piety*. The nearest to such an achievement I have encountered is to be found in the autobiographical reminiscences of W. H. Hudson. His boyhood was spent in an environment which, given a certain child-like spirit, might very well reproduce in his breast the primitive response with which we have been occupied. And certainly something, as he himself has endeavoured to explain to us, was the suffusion of his soul in boyhood, which

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

could hardly be better described than *Piety*. It bloomed in after days in a response to Nature which he has described as follows: "The blue sky, the brown soil beneath, the grass, the trees, the animals, the wind, the rain and stars are never strange to me; for I am in, and of, and am one with them; and my flesh and the soil are one, and the heat in my blood and in the sunshine are one, and the winds and the tempests and my passions are one."¹ Of this "sense" or "primitive faculty," he declares that it awoke within him in his boyhood in the loneliness and splendour of the virgin prairies. In those early days, it was, he says, "so powerful that I am almost afraid to say how deeply I was moved by it."² At first, he narrates, it was a childish delight in nature. But at his eighth year he "began to be distinctly conscious of something more," something which gave him "little thrills, often purely pleasurable, at other times startling, and there were occasions when it became so poignant as to frighten me."³ This can be none other than the emergence of the "numinous" within that primary and undifferentiated address we have entitled *Piety*. He gives graphic instances of his cultivation of this strangely composite emotion,⁴ and considers it just to "describe the experience on those moonlight nights among the trees as similar to the feeling of a person would have if visited by a supernatural being."⁵ And, besides the issuing of that "supernatural" interest, we are given by him to detect, in a vague but sensible fashion, the manner wherein that original, child-like and felicitous communion of his with nature which suffused his own

¹ W. H. Hudson: *Hampshire Days*, p. 61.

² Hudson: *Far Away and Long Ago* (1925), p. 225.

³ *ut sup.*, p. 227.

⁴ *ut sup.*, p. 231.

⁵ *ut sup.*, p. 232.

DIFFERENTIATION OF PIETY

reverent and loving waiting upon the living whole of reality, was as the matrix of an exercise of observation and inference whereby he stands supremely among us as a naturalist, the matrix, too, of a detection and interpretation of beauty which are those of our most intimate poets, and, further, of a bearing in conduct, not only towards his mother, whom he worshipped, but to all sorts and conditions of men, such as is morality in its loveliest bloom and its purest sincerity.

§ 2. *The differentiation of "Piety."*

At its best, however, such an illustration of the character of primitive *Piety* and its cellular development, may be regarded as no more than an analogy, and that an insecure one, since even the spirit of such a boy cannot possibly reproduce the entirely unsophisticated spirit of primitive man. I shall now set my illustration aside, and agree to say again that the precise manner in which primitive *Piety* became differentiated in the four-fold spiritual interests and engagements that are now so familiar to us, is past finding out.

§§ (I) *The emergence of religion, morality, thought, art.*

The spirit of man was peculiarly inspired by what Ward calls "a sort of unscientific trustfulness that seems to have been engrained in all living things."¹ But we cannot now decipher the way in which that venturesomeness led man out of the steppes, by the various defiles we now recognize as the normal tracks of his progress, religion, science, morality and art. Such developments can hardly have been the achievement of mob-movements. It is legitimate to surmise

¹ Ward: *Realm of Ends*, p. 416.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

that the source of these lay in the quickening of particular individuals, whose vision, though prepared in the one spirit of the community with which they were inherently at one, flashed in their own privately illuminated souls, and kindled the fire in the breasts of their fellows. This is in accordance with the third of those laws which Tiele has formulated towards a better understanding of the spiritual development of man, namely, the law of individuals with the quality of genius.¹ Here or there—perhaps *both* here and there—there arose the man in whose breast there moved significantly that nucleus within *Pietas* which, recognizing in the world about him that “life” which has been designated the numinous, and also the kindred response within himself, uttered his discovery, or, shall we say, *acted* his discovery, and so gave it a “form” which was saluted as recognizable, albeit in varying degrees of apprehension, by those to whom he made the revelation that was their own potentially.

So, too, he arose in whose breast there stirred to life and form the nucleus within the glow of *Piety* which in the end became morality. And the like may be said of the emergence of science and art.

In this connection, I would again express my dislike of the theory that this primeval genius, in his apprehension and communication of the significance of reality, was of such a *religious* type that the total extent and content of experience were religiously conceived by him and coloured similarly for his disciples, and that it was left to others long afterwards to build with bricks, borrowed from that sprawling temple of his, subsidiary booths for science, morality and art. There is no reason to picture the

¹ Tiele : in *Elements of the Science of Religion*.

THE PERILS OF DIFFERENTIATION

scientific craftsman, or the worthy fellow-citizen in the cave, or even the lover and imitator of form and colour, to have been, in their prototypes, of lesser importance at the first than the genius in numinous detections, or later in temporal development than he. So soon as one man, groping with his fellows at low-water mark, "was given" the trick of inserting a flake of stone to prise open the bivalve from which they sucked their food, science was in travail to be born. So soon as one man in the cave looked in pity upon the wounded animal to whom he was mated, morality was on the way. So soon as a hunter brooding upon the front of the buffalo or on the tremulous liveness of the limbs of the deer, scrawled his vision with the edge of a dark stone on the white wall of the cliff, art had dawned upon the race.¹ But I cannot believe that these achievements were other than those of men of genius who appeared to the clan as early and quite as notably as did he who sensed and articulated that aspect of experience which became religion.

§§ (2) *The differentiation was inevitable, but perilous.*

The differentiation of primitive *Piety* in the fourfold courses that we recognize as religion, science, art and morality, was, as we have already noted, inevitable. It was necessary and advantageous, as the means of further growth. Neither in the physical realm nor in the psychical, as life is constituted, could it be otherwise. But it was attended by disadvantages as well. Emergence from that stage in which "the

¹ "It is a debatable point," says Bousset, "whether the various pictorial representations on stone, horn, and ivory, in high or low relief, which date from the earliest period of human history—the early Stone Age—are due to a religious motive, or to an instinct for imitation and amusement, or to a purely æsthetic impulse" (*What is Religion?* p. 4).

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

various elements in man's view of the world were fused—did not exist as separate and possibly rival systems,"¹ carried with it the possibility of competitive relationships and rivalries which, as history makes plain, became actual. This was aggravated by the tendency to inequality in the pace of the development shown by each. Each is characterized historically by seasons of arrest and even petrification, and, again, by periods of renascence and sometimes amazing efflorescence. And sometimes these periods are contemporary in each of the four spheres. But not infrequently they do not coincide; and in these instances the general spiritual engagement of man with nature and life becomes lop-sided, disturbed, and fruitful of evil consequences, with rivalry as the result.²

§§ (3) *Mankind's longing to recover the lost harmony.*

In spite of these jealousies and rivalries, the spirit of mankind continued to be haunted by a sense of something lost, and a yearning to recover from those disruptions, and to regain that unitive awareness and experience of reality which we have called *Piety*. In illustration of this I need not refer further to the general sense of lapse from a former "golden age." I would rather indicate instances of this *heimweh* as addressing itself to the recovery of a lost harmony between the

¹ Strong: *Religion, Philosophy and History*, p. 61.

² Take, for example, the jealous indifference of the early Greek physicists to religion (Adam: *The Religious Teachers of Greece*, pp. 19 f.); and how "with Socrates a new era begins, and from this point the advancement of religious thought in Greece is effected by philosophy alone" (Adam, *ut sup.*); and how Aristotle completed the severance between religion and morality (Luthardt: *Moral Truths of Christianity*, p. 181); consider, too, such catastrophes as occurred by reason of the excessive domination of Puritanism (morality) in the 16th century, and the subsequent excess of the æsthetic interest; consider, also, the enmity frequently displayed by "great imaginative artists" against a religion which has hardened as deism (C. C. J. Webb, in *Divine Personality and Human Life*).

MAN'S YEARNING FOR A LOST HARMONY

fourfold spiritual interests of humankind. In Greece there prevailed a tenacious desire to secure an organic connection between science and the arts.¹ As for the relation between art and morality, the very severity that Plato showed towards the former is prompted by a passion of spiritual unity which would evince all the spiritual interests and engagements of man as cohering in one disposition to reality and life. As for the relation between morality and religion, Socrates combined, in a way that baffles many of his interpreters, a rationalistic attitude to morality with a belief and practice, not without pathos even in its whimsical moods, of religious rites, which really strikes back through cultus to *Piety*. Again, Plato, in spite of the bold deliverance he seems to have secured for morality, leans back on devout imaginations, with a fanciful humour which does not entirely conceal a mood of apprehension at the gap that is appearing between ethics and religion.

We do well to observe again that this "secular" development of ethics is not something to be condemned out of hand. It was inevitable, as was the establishment in seeming independence of religion, art, and science. But with ethics, as with these others, a point was reached at which the abstraction it had become was brought home to men, not only as a result of speculation's attaining its limits, but by recognition of the impossibility of limiting or interpreting conduct by what appears in treatises on morality. In such as the Stoics and Platonists there appeared in growing force that compulsion in the human soul which calls for a wider context in life than the moral scheme which ethics exhibit, which calls, in fact, for a renewal in some form of that

¹ See St. Loe Strachey: *The River of Life*, pp. 102 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

synthesis from which ethics and all these other apparently isolated spiritual adventures drew out at the first.

The Stoic ethics mark at its fullest the aim of that yearning in the Greek spirit. The confines of ethics as a science, or art, were transcended, and the human spirit sought a context and a content for morality in the round of reality, and, in so doing, passed through metaphysic to what is religious in character and to a disposition of spirit more primitive than religion. The Stoics failed to compass this re-achievement of *Piety*. The reason of their failure is not far to seek. Their ethics, the starting-point of their quest, were rationalistic. They drove their rational quest to its uttermost, and then stood forlorn. And this came to pass, because a satisfying re-achievement of *Piety* cannot be secured unless and until something more than Thought (science, philosophy) is given its full share in the quest; and that something more includes Religion (worship, devotion, communal rites), Art (the practice of the presence of Beauty) and the kindly ways of customary Morality.

In connection with that last sentence we might note how the whole normal course of philosophy is really infused with that longing to unify that varied address of man's spirit towards reality. Many are convinced that, if that consummation is to be reached, philosophy is our only real hope. But others are not thus assured. Inge, in speaking, as do others already noted, of the jealousy between religion, science and art, proceeds to say that "philosophy tries to mediate between them," but that "the task has so far been beyond its powers."¹ In Bergson an effort is made to diminish its intellectual character in the hope of

¹ Inge : *Science and Ultimate Truth*, p. 31.

attaining a more intimate appreciation of that "life" in all things which is richer and fuller than "thought"; but Bergson simply substitutes one partial simplification for another. Those who maintain the idealistic mode in philosophy busy themselves in an effort to find room in an intellectual apprehension of the whole for those other addresses to reality, without which, as they recognize, a truly unitive interpretation will ever remain defective in its partiality. Sorley, for example, is alive to this. He calls attention to the "synoptic" character that our knowledge of the world has "at the outset," remarking that "this knowledge resembles vision, not discourse," a knowledge in which "we have acquaintance with something more than the distinguishable parts into which we afterwards analyse the thing known," and he considers that "our final metaphysical idea will be like that. It will be a view of the world mediated indeed by reasons, but itself more comprehensive than those reasons; and it will possess the wholeness of the immediate intuition."¹ This desirable philosophical synopsis he describes further as "a process in which the imagination is called in to construct a new intuition, based on the facts and connexions laid bare by analysis, but imitating the togetherness or wholeness of perception."² But who may say that philosophy has attained this consummation? It has not done so, and the reason is that suggested by Sorley's reference to the need of insight into experience of a different kind than that of intellectual enquiry, even though this be informed with "imagination." We know what that further and different experience involves; it involves all the spiritual interests of man, and

¹ Sorley: *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 258.

² *ut sup.*, p. 260; cf. p. 292.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

these, his scientific, moral, æsthetical, and religious interests, will yield their comprehensive secret only to that disposition of the human spirit in which they are restored to the primary unitive address we have chosen to call *Piety*.

PART THREE

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AND "PIETY"

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Jesus and "Piety"</i>	367
1. <i>The age was ripe for the Spirit that was in Jesus</i>	368
(1) <i>The limits and loneliness of Religion</i>	368
(2) <i>The limits and loneliness of Morality, Science, Art.</i>	369
(3) <i>The intervention of Jesus</i>	372
2. <i>The achievement of the "Piety" of Jesus</i>	373
(1) <i>"Piety" as explicative of that quality of his spirit which concerned us throughout our ethical quest</i>	373
(2) <i>"Piety" as the secret of his morality</i>	377
(3) <i>The bearing of the "Piety" of Jesus on :</i>	
(a) <i>Religion</i>	381
(b) <i>Thought</i>	384
(c) <i>Art</i>	385

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AND "PIETY"

In ancient and modern times, as we have seen, we witness a persistent longing to achieve, or to re-achieve, the inherent unity of man's communion with reality, and we have noted instances of the effort to satisfy it. Must we conclude that so fundamental a movement of the spirit of man has ever been futile, and that it still remains so? Or what shall we say? I venture to say that in Jesus something very like this accomplishment has appeared among men. Certainly it is in some personality we must look to light upon this achievement. When a sage, philosopher, or poet, or one in whom the distinctive qualifications of these are as one, arises, possessed of this synthetic soul, he will be at peace with the world and all that the world signifies, not because he has, in some departmental fashion, gained the innermost secrets of religion, or because he has gripped the "moral law" at the heart of it, or because he has touched beauty at its own innermost spring, or because he has comprehended the thought that informs all things, but because, by some spiritual *tour de force* of a unifying character, he brings to bear upon reality a soul within which are fused, in one responsiveness and gift of interpretation, the movements which in ordinary men require to be defined as a religious interest, an æsthetic interest, a moral interest, a speculative interest, and

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

which, in order to be sustained, must be conducted in something like isolation from one another.

§ 1. *The age was ripe for the Spirit that was in Jesus.*

Now, as to this desideratum, I venture to maintain that heed should be given to Jesus as its satisfaction. My further proposition is, that, at the time in which he appeared among men, the process of differentiation, with its untoward attendances, among the fourfold spiritual interests of man, had reached a stage at which it was inherently necessary that the original unitive address to reality should be recovered.

§§ (1) *The limits and loneliness of Religion.*

In one province of the world, religion had reached as full a development as that enterprise of the human spirit can attain even in jealous independence of the others. May we not affirm this of the ritualism and prophecy of Israel? In respect of the sense and apprehension of the presence and character of the one, universal God, which that religion enshrined, His "awe-ful" nature and His "fatherly" care and providence; in respect of that worship which was so amazingly purified of all idolatry and which assembled its participants in rites, some of them as beautifully homely as the pastoral rites of the dawn of humanity, others of them as magnificent as can be, and yet set about an "holy of holies" whose vacancy was the symbol of infinity; in respect, too, of a simplicity and austerity of personal devotion which baptised the whole round of the domestic and public interests of life with the dew of a divine significance; in respect, also, of a system of redemption wherein, by sacramental rites without and filial repentance and obedience within, men and women were produced with the

LIMITS OF THE FOUR SPIRITUALITIES

unmistakable quality of sainthood—there had never been any religion in the earth to compare with that consummate commerce with the Divine. Herein religion had attained its utmost significance and worth.

§§ (2) *The limits, etc., of Morality, Science and Art.*

Next, may we not find that this that marks the flowering of religion among the Hebrews, is the corresponding characteristic of those engagements with morality, knowledge and art which, in the same age, were the peculiar concern of that great suffusion of the spirit of man which issued from Greece. The courageous thesis that is thus suggested is this, that, in the Hellenic culture, art, science, and ethics had achieved a consummation which set them as the standards and norms of those spiritual concerns; their vitality and significance were final in the sense that therein the impulse of those particular spiritualities, after long labour, had now reached its confines, and was, in an ideal way at least, completely embodied. It may be avowed that much argumentation were required to make good so sweeping a claim for Greece. And yet the thesis may be, and indeed has been, commendably supported by certain whose intimacy with those fields is exact and well informed. Morality, for example, attained a definition in the age of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, so ample in analysis and in meaning for practical life, that even now that attainment is the matrix of ethical principles, and is as the quarry out of which the practicable array of moral wisdom is built. The subject-matter of ethics was then so exhibited and arranged that no matter from what divers angles ethics are approached in the various schools, their issue in the sphere of the virtues and duties is, to all intents and purposes, an identical

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

issue ; they offer the scheme that the Greeks contrived, or they do little more than argue for an ampler development of the antique analysis.

It might seem that I stretch the bow to snapping-point if I direct this contention to a like significance of Greek science in the age that preceded Jesus. And yet the modern estimate of it is one that avers the establishment there and then of the principles that constitute the scientific interest in reality, and also the discovery of the main, regulative, theories of research and much of the substance of scientific information. We are told indeed that "when we consider the science of the Greeks, and come quickly to love it and slowly to see how great it was, we likewise see that it was restricted as compared with our own." But he, from whom I quote, proceeds to sketch the contribution which such an one as Aristotle made to science, with reference to biology in particular, and declares that in him "the whole range of biological science is sketched out, and the greater part of the great canvas is painted in."¹ Another expert in this province presents the matter thus : "I have called Greece the sole creator of that spirit of free enquiry and scientific thought which in religion, morals, politics and physical science makes the civilization of the West what it is. That seems a big claim. It does not, of course, mean that the achievements of modern science were anticipated by the Greeks ; obviously such an idea is absurd. But achievements in science and philosophy are made possible mainly by a certain attitude to life, a certain way of looking at the world. This way is first found in Greece. . . . They started science on the right lines and in the

¹ D'A. W. Thomson : Essay on "Natural Science," in *The Legacy of Greece*, pp. 140, 159.

WORLD AT END OF ITS RESOURCES

right spirit ; and science once so started, the hardest part of the work was done.”¹

In such judgments as these we may safely find ground for the thesis offered, that in science, as well as in morality and religion, the spirit of man had advanced ideally to the regulative confines of those various engagements with nature and life. And the same may be said of the æsthetic interest, and that without any great fear of controversy. From Michael Angelo, through Goethe, Wordsworth, Shelley, to Rodin—so various are the constituents of the “great cloud of witnesses”—an *aurea catena* could readily be contrived to put this matter beyond doubt.

It remains now to be observed again that these various spiritualities, in the age upon which Jesus issued, had come to such a pass, as I said above, in the medley of spiritual divergences, that despair was creeping through the very heart of civilization.² Religion at its highest, and that was in Israel, had faltered and hardened, and seemed incapable of further vitality. And the same may truly be affirmed of ethics, science, and art. Morality had attained its utmost in analysis and description, the principles of its province were exhaustively explored, and the spirit of those to whom it was their innermost concern in life was groping after satisfactions which could not be found within its limits. As for science, we are taught that “in the second century B.C., the brilliance begins to fade. Research continues : additions are made to knowledge ; and there are

¹ R. W. Livingstone : *The Pageant of Greece*, pp. 407, 411, 414.

² cf. Glover : *Progress in Religion*, p. 338 : “It is a picture of a world astray. All the right instincts are there, but they are scattered and working against one another. . . . They could only begin again when the scattered elements were re-united, and what belonged together came together again.”

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

great men even in the Roman epoch. . . . But the creative originality of the earlier period is gone.”¹ The same halt and heaviness mark the fortunes of art. The century after the Persian wars was its flowering time in Greece ; thereafter, there ensued that period of static maturity which brings imitation and repetition in the wake of originality.”²

§§ (3) *The intervention of Jesus.*

Within this world of disconnected spiritual quests and enterprises, there bloomed in Jesus a spirit which held, as in a quadruple star, something very like that unitive communion with reality, which was once the undifferentiated, diffusive, but felicitous experience of the human race. Inge considers that “ we shall be harmoniously developed men in proportion as we can make our own something of what the saint, the scientist and the artist respectively find in their experience of life.”³ It is so ; and this harmony is the native and abiding impulse of the soul of man. Now, Jesus had the secret of that harmonious attitude to reality. And, at the outset of his ministry at least, he appears to have called upon his fellows to recognize that with them, too, it was their endowment or birth-right. I venture to put it thus—that he set himself the mission of restoring men to *Piety*, and that that was the function he recognized himself as in the world to fulfil. We are not satisfied to be told that “ Christ was a supreme discoverer and creator—but only in one field. . . . He was a specialist in Ethics and Religion.”⁴ The last thing in the world we

¹ R. W. Livingstone : *op. cit.*, p. 413.

² Percy Gardner : Essay on “ The Lamps of Greek Art,” in *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 354.

³ Inge : *Science and Ultimate Truth*, p. 31.

⁴ Streeter : *Reality*, p. 202.

JESUS RESTORES PIETY

savour in Jesus was specialism ! Even if we say that his absorbent concern was God and man's communion with God, that is a specialism which cannot stop at the boundaries of ethics or even of religion, as we have come to understand religion. I like Streeter better, from whom the above statement is quoted, when he describes Jesus as possessed of a man's courage and a man's intellect, and at the same time retaining the child's heart and the child's direct simplicity.¹ This is a spirit which has a wider occupation than the concerns of ethics and religion.

§ 2. *The achievement of the " Piety " of Jesus.*

I proceed to submit that it is the spirit we have chosen to describe as *Piety* that clarifies and equates the disposition towards nature and life which has haunted us throughout our engagement with Jesus. No partial title, such as teacher, or religious reformer, or " specialist in ethics and religion," or the like, is broad enough or ultimate enough to describe that bearing of his which, as we have more or less clearly detected from time to time, is engaged with the whole concord of reality, and is engrossed in something deeper than the departmental interests of the four spiritual enterprises of man in his intercourse with the quasi-independent values, the holy, the good, the true and the beautiful.

§§ (1) "*Piety*" as explicative of that quality of his spirit which concerned us throughout our ethical quest.

It is this that came upon our spirits even in that impressionist sketch of Jesus which we elicited in our survey of *Mark* (pp. 24 ff.). You will remember

¹ Streeter : *ut sup.*, p. 185.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

how we were led so far beyond the image of him as a teacher of morality, and even of religion, that we wondered whether we could regard ourselves on the right lines at all in proceeding to estimate his place among the ethical sages.¹ Subsequently, when we tried to explore the spirit of Jesus under the risky and yet just description of the "poetical," we touched elements and flavours in it which, I would now contend, have received something of an explication. We found that spirit of the poet in Jesus, which, in Berguet's description of it, "feels the universe taking life within itself, and sees in the spectacle of everyday existence the reflection of higher verities which the human eye hardly dares to contemplate" (p. 57; cf. also pp. 62, 129 ff.).

May I not say with some assurance that, as we proceeded to compare and assort the teaching of Jesus with that of the schools, we came back again and again, by a kind of compulsion inherent in our study, to that prevailing and fundamental quality in the spirit of Jesus?—an attitude on the part of Jesus to nature and life such as we felt to be ulterior to those partial dispositions of the human spirit that operate in morality, knowledge and even in religion. I need not expand this. I think I may be allowed to refer simply to those passages in the course of our study in which, stage by stage, we were constrained to turn to some such description of his spirit as we now make bold to identify with *Piety*, and those passages in which we dealt with his attempts to awaken it in others by means of phrases and similitudes which demand the significance of *Piety* for their interpretation.

¹ See p. 44, etc. From this point, I shall insert such references in the text above.

PIETY AS BURDEN OF ENQUIRY

I shall remain content, therefore, if my reader will but recollect what we discovered as implied in the "immediacy" of Jesus' address to the souls of men (p. 90), that address of his to all that concerns us, which represents a fusion of thought, emotion and will, such as may be called "mystical," if care be taken, as we tried to do, with that abused and fretted word (p. 134). And you will recollect what we resolved to ourselves of the "insight" of Jesus, in comparison with that of the Stoics (p. 81), and also in connection with the views of Green (p. 216 ff.). We might select, in further elucidation of this, from those passages in which we sought to explore the "intuitive" character of his spirit. Of these (pp. 134 ff., 210 ff., etc.) I might refer you in particular to the relationship we explored between the "intuition" of Bergson and that of Jesus (pp. 254 ff.).

Our enquiry took the same bias as we gave heed to the variety of terms which Jesus used in his teaching and as explicative of the open secret of his own soul, to awaken the secret within the souls of his attendants and to open for them the way of return to their spiritual heritage. Recall what we were led to regard as the inner significance of the Kingdom (pp. 125 ff.); recall, in succession, what we touched in the recesses of the "faith," "love" (pp. 127 ff., 146 ff., 219 ff.) "child-likeness" (pp. 137 ff., 179 ff.), "re-birth" (p. 186, etc.), "home-going" (pp. 182, 174), "life" (pp. 162 ff., 265 ff.), which Jesus proposed as the "entrances" into that realm where the eternal values cohere and abide in their fulness, which he was accustomed to call the kingdom of God; and you will be prepared, I trust, to agree that the avenue he sought to disclose is not inaptly described as that unitive and synthetic attitude we have entitled *Piety*.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

More than once we essayed to give a summary description of the spirit he was of (pp. 147 f., 267, etc.); and now I consider that what we were trying to bring thus to a definition has reached a point in that conception. This spirit is a fusion of thought, emotion and volition as operates historically in the actual bearing of childhood to reality. It has to be recovered as by a "re-birth." It is in evidence, in an appreciable degree, in certain men and women of a wholesome "mystical," "poetical," or "prophetical" flair of spirit. But theirs is not a unique or rare endowment. We have the impression that Jesus sensed it as vitally present in all souls, and as awaiting the removal of manageable weights and restrictions. Its cogency, from various causes, may be diminished, just as the efficacy of "conscience" is recognized as reduced in many breasts; but, as in the latter, so in the former, it is the imperative equipment of all, and, if given play, will lead into the significance of life (p. 268).

Herein, I venture to propose, is the elucidation of that which haunted us in our successive contacts with the spirit that lay at the heart of Jesus' disposition to nature and life. Jesus was the incarnation and re-attainment of *Piety* among the children of men. The New Testament is variously affected by the sense of a renewal in Jesus of a condition of the race wherein all was simple, felicitous and innocent. By Paul Jesus is called the new Adam. I am well aware, of course, that there is involved in that conception a process of redemption from a Fall into sin to which my reader may think I have very greatly failed to do justice. I shall yet come to this. It is not without significance, too, that the advent of Jesus was described among the first Christians in

PIETY AS SECRET OF HIS MORALITY

terms that are quick with the sense of a restoration among men of a lost world of pastoral simplicity and beauty. I refer to the nativity tales (Luke ii, 8 ff; Matt. ii, 1 ff; Luke ii, 25 ff; Luke ii, 36 ff.). The question of their historicity does not really concern us. Indeed, my point may be all the sharper if these lovely idylls are the creation of a devout imagination prevalent in the early Church; because they would then be the efflorescence of a conviction within their hearts, that in Jesus there was come again an age in which life was restored to an intimacy in which the ways of shepherd folk were mingled with heavenly music, an age, too, in which those of a primitive and wholesome quietism held heaven in their arms, and in which the inquisitive mind of man was regarded as truly postured in obeisance to the spirit of the Child. In Jesus the birthright of the race is restored; he is the Son of Man as he who evinced humanity in its native significance, and, as the new Adam, "shows what humanity really is."¹

§§ (2) "*Piety*" as the secret of his morality.

We are now in touch with the secret of the bearing of Jesus to the interests and problems that occupy morality. It is also the secret of his attitude to religion; and it will be found to illumine his bearing to knowledge and art. Our primary interest in this enquiry has to do with his ethical secret; and I propose to engage you for a little with the operation of this "secret" of his in the field of ethics. Thereafter I shall add a note or two on its relation to the other spiritualities.

At the outset, may we not remark that it is in his

¹ See W. R. Matthews: "The Doctrine of Christ," in *The Future of Christianity*, p. 120.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

penetration to *Piety* that we shall look to find the real explanation of his casual attitude, or even indifference, towards the concrete substance of ethics and moral debate? This is a feature of his engagement with morality which struck our attention from time to time. Morality with its inevitable tendency to make rules for conduct, however logical and reasonable these may be, bears hurtfully on the spaciousness of life, and, if too much regarded, breeds a conscientiousness that may make life a burden. Jesus broke loose from this into a world as ample as life itself, and trusted that general directiveness of his soul which we have called *Piety* to show the way. It was a spirit which so occupied him that his movement through moral problems seems almost instinctive; it fulfils what is offered in the saying that "the true goodness must be unconscious," and that "what Jesus requires is not a process of building, but of growth."¹ It is that functioning of *Piety* in the field of conduct which is almost careless of the particular rules and customs which hold sway among men, confident that if it be allowed scope in the heart, it will use these as sufficient means towards what is right and good. Morality is a tree whereof the branches are those rules and customs. It matters little whether they conform or not to the design of those who would trim and adjust them to their own theory of what is right and good; to such they may seem twisted and awry, fortuitous, redundant, and even at cross purposes to one another. It matters not, if there flows in them that which issues in wholesome fruit. And this it was that welled in the soul of Jesus, as from a spring in Eden itself.

Jesus was content to use the traditional morality

¹ E. F. Scott: *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 117, 118.

JESUS AND TRADITIONAL MORALITY

of his age, because it is in truth the traditional morality of every age, even of the most primitive, as we have been led to believe. I may be misunderstood if I say that Jesus would have been content to take as equally convenient for life the moral *schemata* of the great Greeks and the moral apparatus of the Hebrews. But this is the case if, as James Seth avers, you have but to "develop the deeper implications of Pagan morality, to have the Christian morality," and that "the Christian ideal is not the opposite of the Greek, the 'reversal of all the moral values of the Pagan world'; its valuations are anticipated by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as well as by the Cynics and the Stoics."¹ The fact is, in the history of moral ideas the content is persistently very much the same throughout. At any rate we may say so of the view of life, current in all ages, that heroism, holiness and loyalty are the ultimate elements in a life that is worth while. "Perhaps," reflects Sorley, "the life of spirit and the life for others—is one which the moral judgment approves with a constancy which is almost uniform."² The interest of Jesus in morality is not to be sought in novelty of substance, but in newness of Spirit. Seth, as we have already noted, finds that spirit in the Christian "substitution of Love and Faith . . . for the Greek principle of Wisdom or intellectual insight, as the condition of the best life."³ This is so; but we agree to it in terms of that interpretation of love we have reached under the title of *Piety*.⁴

¹ James Seth: *Essays on Ethics and Religion*, pp. 98.

² Sorley: *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, pp. 106 f.

³ *op. cit.*, p. 150.

⁴ Seth calls this supreme contribution to morality Love or, alternatively, Faith. As to Faith being explicable by *Piety*, I find support in the following descriptions: "Faith constitutes an experience in which each

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Let it not be thought, however, that the customary array and significance of the virtues and duties, to which morality advances in detail, remain very much as they were before Jesus engaged with them, with no further alteration in them than their being informed with a new spiritual flair. Some writers consider that they do all that need be done when they have illustrated the cardinal virtues of antiquity by Jesus' pictorial or poetical exhibition of them. Others consider that in what the apostle Paul calls "faith, hope, and love," something additional has been contributed to the cardinal virtues, either as a new accretion, or as that which extends and deepens them. The truth of the matter lies in a more intimate connection than these views indicate. Paul's virtues are a legitimate summary of the Gospel morality ; but they are the normal virtues re-inspired and brought to a new bloom by means of the recovery in the human heart of that unitive disposition to nature and life and God, the informative Spirit of all, which we have chosen to call *Piety*. They are neither supreme illustrations or extensions of Temperance, Courage, Wisdom, and Justice or Benevolence, nor additional efflorescences of the moral life. They *are* those cardinal virtues supplied with a new sap and spiritual vigour, and, accordingly, characterized with a new beauty and nourishing quality. They are the cardinal virtues made *exuberant*. The so-called pagan virtues give the impression of virtues that, bravely enough,

of the three ultimate modes of being conscious—knowing, feeling, and willing—is involved."—H. R. Mackintosh : *The Divine Initiative*, pp. 71 f.; " Faith is a kind of climbing instinct, which draws us upward and onward. It is at first quite vague and undifferentiated, and partly sub-conscious. Then it takes shape as a homage to, a craving after, God, who shines as a triple constellation in the spiritual firmament, as the Source of the Good, the True and the Beautiful. The God of Faith is revealed to us under these three attributes."—Inge : *Personal Religion*, p. 45.

JESUS' TRANSFIGURATION OF VIRTUE

and yet sadly, as of men who have stiffened themselves against the hostility of things, endeavour to hold their own by the strength of what is right and reasonable to themselves. Jesus invaded this anxious camp with news of a forgotten armistice between man and the universe, and bade them trust the goodness and loveliness that includes them and all things in the one life and enfranchisement of love. In such a disciple of his as Paul was, a discerning Greek would not have declared that here are new virtues in operation, either in excess of the old, or in opposition to them. He would have detected a manifestation of courage, wisdom, benevolence, and even of temperance, which was in line with those accustomed qualities; but, at the same time, he would have savoured a vitality in them, an exuberant quality, so much out of the common as to require the new names under which they bloomed in Christian nomenclature.

Jesus sought not to substitute among men a new morality in place of the old. He was satisfied that men were sufficiently equipped with the norms of what is right and wrong, good and bad in human conduct. He came within these with a new spirit. This was more than a new "ethical principle," concerned, as is the function of such principles, with the moral life alone. It was an ultimate disposition of the whole spirit of man, which was not limited in its inspiring operation to the practice of conduct, but acted as the atmosphere and inspiration of all his spiritual interests and engagements.

§§ (3) *The bearing of the "Piety" of Jesus on—*

§§§ (a) *Religion.*

As with morality, as we have seen, so with religion,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the concern of Jesus lay not in substituting new for old. Jesus gives no real indication that he desired a "religion" independent of ritual and communal devotions; as we have already seen, it is not thus that his description of worship as "in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24) is to be interpreted. He was satisfied with the broad stream of the ancestral religion; he himself bathed his soul therein. But he had recaptured in his own soul, and he would have others recapture, that Eden-like simplicity and virginity of disposition towards reality, out of which religion developed with an independence that contributed its share to the disruption, in barrenness and jealousy, of the various aspects of *Piety*. His passion for this re-achievement it is that explains a seeming contradiction, namely that, on the one hand, he was jealously devoted to his fathers' Faith, and that, on the other hand, he gave the impression of a concern with its problems that was casual, or even indifferent. He was occupied with something that is more primary than religion; and thereby he attained a bearing to religion which both re-informed it with the spirit whence it issued at the first, and could be trusted to deal with its faulty tendencies or rotten adhesions as a vital tree deals with its dead wood and the fungus that fouls the moribund.

Further, it is this primary occupation of the spirit of Jesus that illuminates his attitude to the religion of those beyond the pale of Israel. At times it would almost seem that he regarded such alien religions as destitute of virtue: once he said categorically, "Salvation comes from the Jews" (John iv, 22). But he was concerned for the enlightenment of the pagan world. In the summer of A.D. 29 he deserted Galilee and invaded the pagan north.

THE PIETY OF JESUS AND RELIGION

“Though Tyre was strongly anti-Semitic, and Phœnicia pagan, Jesus evidently felt that here, as in Samaria and Peræa, he might win a larger response than among pure-blooded Jews or even Galileans. He did not turn to the north simply for retirement and safety or even for reflection alone. He had mission work in view.”¹ There is no word of his confronting the various baals of the Syrians and the Greeks and Romans, as might a new Elijah. In the course of that northern mission, which “must have lasted for several months,” and the results of which “thrilled Jesus,”² there occurred the wonderful episode of the Syro-Phœnician Woman (Matt. xv, 22 ff.). The circumstance in the story I would emphasize is the disclosure it yields us of that for which Jesus was on the outlook to find among men—not a correctness of theological doctrine, or a treasuring of holy books, or a spiritual seemliness in worship and the symbols of temples, but something he saluted in that woman as “faith.” Her wit won him. But there was nothing pert or sophisticated about her repartee. It issues with a child’s simplicity; it is homely, pathetic, and serenely daring. It is the expression of a spirit that is observant of the creatures that cluster at the feet of men, and has felt for them and with them, as for children of the one family; a spirit as of a child that would supplicate help from prince or peasant indifferently because neither differs from the other in eyes that look upon him, or in hands that are equally strong to help; a spirit that reflects the sunshine of trust and hope and confidence in all one’s fellows, that lay upon Eden at the first. As in the case of the centurion of Capernaum (Matt.

¹ Moffatt: *Everyman’s Life of Jesus*, p. 122.

² Moffatt: *ut sup.*, p. 123.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

viii, 10), so likewise here, Jesus caught a gleam of that spirit which was a lovelier thing to him than any orthodoxy, the temper of soul which was more vital than the most valid beliefs and practices of religion, or the most approved array of moral principles, and which, if actively suffused as the climate of the soul, could be left to make of any religion or morality an adequate vehicle for the spiritual necessities of man.

§§§ (b) *Thought.*

I pass on to remark that this primary concern of Jesus, his passion for *Piety*, affords an understanding of his attitude to knowledge and art; it explains that seeming indifference to these interests, or even oblivion of them, which has greatly vexed his interpreters. The customary explanations offered in relief of this perplexity are such as Keim gives as follows: "Implicitly, by the spirit of his life and of his addresses, to which nothing that is natural, nothing that is human—neither the beauty of a flower nor the pearl of the home, nor the sweat of the workman, nor the charm of the wisdom of Solomon, nor even emulation of that wisdom—is foreign, he lovingly fosters the future prosperity of the home and the State, of society, art, and science, nay, he intimately hides these things in the very roots of his spiritual activity."¹ The truth of the matter is indicated in those concluding phrases. Jesus was engrossed in the roots of all man's spiritual activities, or rather, in that one root from which those several activities emerged at the first. Upon that he concentrated his attention in the conviction that, were it revitalized in the human heart, a new virtue

¹ Keim : *Jesus of Nazara*, Vol. III, p. 121.

HIS PIETY AND THOUGHT AND ART

would circulate, not only through religion and morality, but through science and art as well, and the cohesion of all these in one another would be re-established.

Had Jesus visited Athens, his attitude to the science and logomachy of the schools might have appeared one of indifference. And yet we cannot conceive of him as unaffected by the marvels of her scientific research or the profundities of her philosophical enquiries. But surely he had sensed that forlorn aimlessness which had overtaken the Greek intellect in that age, an aimlessness which is ever fated to attend the pursuit of learning when divorced from the other spiritualities. His evangel to them had been that of *Piety*. He had endeavoured to re-awaken within them that spirit of address to the meaning of nature's behaviour of which the greatest scientists have caught more than a passing glance; that spirit that breathed in Huxley's heart when he avowed that nature will never yield her secrets save to those who "sit down before her like a little child." It is such a spirit as Bosanquet has declared to be essential to all thought in fulfilling its function of "the characterization of reality": "If you can get the mind's thought pure—that is, as it is in its own nature and free from certain definite defects—you must possess in it a true characterization of reality."¹

§§§ (c) Art.

What I have thus said of the relation of Jesus to science might be repeated of his relation to Art, and that indeed even more readily. It is only the most careless of his appraisers who are foolish enough to say that Jesus "neglected art." If art be the detection

¹ Bosanquet: *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemp. Phil.*, p. 82.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

of beauty in nature and life, and its utterance, there are few who can so justly be called artist and poet as Jesus. If art be that creation of beauty which really consists in the discovery of a significance in reality in which the commonest things are seen to burn with ethereal and eternal radiance, Jesus is pre-eminently the greatest of them all. It is altogether idle to remark on the silence of the records as to sayings and pronouncements of his concerning the lines of architecture or statuary, and the designs and output of painters. Again let us recall the meagre and selective character of the *memorabilia*. But again let us note that here too, in the realm of beauty, as in those of religion and morality, the concern of Jesus lay in the restoration of that spirit of undivided and unspoiled communion with the continuous spiritual realm of which the beautiful is a value that is recognizably one aspect, but not truly susceptible of pursuit independently of the others. That spirit was his which not only issued in words and gestures that caught the secret of beauty as surely as those whose lyre or chisel has enriched the treasure-house of the arts, but which mingled truth and worship, goodness and beauty in the native unity of the human spirit in its communion with nature and humanity. He thought in worship, and he worshipped "in the beauty of awe"; he spoke of goodness as one might utter a song: "he thought in pictures and he taught in pictures"; "he presented ethics to the world under the aspect of beauty."¹ As in the case of science, so too in art, that spirit is the requisite of discovery and fulfilment which Keats called "the feel of humility," that childlikeness and responsiveness of "faith" and "love" which we have located

¹ Dearmer: "Christianity and Art," in *The Necessity of Art*, p. 39.

ART

in *Piety*. Its presence in him and in those whom he inspired was destined not only to add to the treasury of art in the world, but to inform art with an Eden-like quality and to involve it in those religious, moral and even theoretic implications in which it was natively involved at the outset, but from which it had drawn apart in the necessary but perilous differentiation of the spiritualities of man.

PART THREE

CHAPTER V

A NECESSARY SUPPLEMENT TO OUR ENQUIRY

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>A Necessary Supplement to our Enquiry</i>	391
1. <i>Jesus and the communication of his Spirit</i>	392
2. <i>Jesus and his engagement with Evil</i>	394
(1) <i>His recognition of himself as Redeemer</i>	397
(2) <i>His cancelling of Sin</i>	398
(3) <i>The renewal of his mission of "Piety"</i>	402
(a) <i>Middleton Murry's view of Jesus "the Teacher" and Jesus "the Saviour"</i>	403
(b) <i>His continuance with his disciples</i>	404
(c) <i>His need of a "Fellowship": the significance of the Lord's Supper</i>	406
(d) <i>The "Church" as the veritable Body of Christ</i>	407
3. <i>The Church as the channel of the transfiguring Spirit of Christ.</i>	409
(1) <i>The transfiguration of Morality</i>	410
(2) <i>The transfiguration of Art</i>	411
(3) <i>The transfiguration of Thought</i>	414
(4) <i>The transfiguration of Religion</i>	419

CHAPTER V

A NECESSARY SUPPLEMENT TO OUR ENQUIRY

I ought now to bring this enquiry of ours to a close. Our quest began in the field of ethics, with the purpose of detecting the place that Jesus may be regarded as occupying in the array of the moral sages, and of discerning, if we could, his own ethical secret. All this has taken us further afield than we may have anticipated. But our enquiry had its own cogency of direction; and our obedience to it has been, I trust, not altogether unprofitable.

I am well aware that my conclusions are attended with difficulties. I am ready to hear of "faults of commission" in the line and substance of my argument. But my reader may be more eager to cry out against my "faults of omission." To the chief of these I shall myself direct him. In the first place, what shall I say of the fashion in which Jesus is to be regarded as fulfilling that mission of his which we have ventured to describe as the restoration of *Piety* among the distracted children of men? That is one question which demands an answer. And the other of the two chief questions which wait on my thesis is this: What relevance has this description of Jesus as the re-quickener of *Piety*, to the fact and presence of that which is called Evil and Sin? Does it not appear that the measure I have constructed of the spirit and service of Jesus is deficient indeed when applied to

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

all that is involved in his sufferings and death, the might and tragedy of his engagement with that in the world which demanded his blood, the passion and power of that which his followers have hailed as redemption from sin, death and the grave?

You will be just to me, as you put these questions, by recalling that I have not been altogether unmindful of them in the course of our study. But they ought now to be faced with a just and adequate attention. And this I am prepared to do. But I must content myself in this book with a mere summary of what might be written of those further problems and implications. This will afford an outline, but with all the shortcomings of an outline. Accordingly, I will now add a "supplementary part" to the present enquiry; and this will proceed along the line of the two questions exhibited above.

§ 1. *Jesus and the communication of his Spirit.*

At the outset of his mission Jesus sought to quicken within the souls of his hearers by the words of his mouth that spirit of *Piety* which would reveal and open wide to them the "kingdom of God" about them and within them. He *preached* it. He came upon them, and encompassed them about, with parables and many imaginative phrases, with words and gestures that had the directness and simplicity of sunbeams, with such looks as awaken hearts to know and possess one another, with silences such as allow words to be spoken within our breast which men have known from their birth, and for the most part have forgotten since then—with these and the like addresses he endeavoured to woo and arouse them, to stir up the smouldering embers of a lost "love" or "childlikeness" within them, and by the

JESUS AND COMMUNICATION OF PIETY

intensity of his burning speech to fan it into that light in which we see the light wherewith every bush is ablaze with the divine, and every child of earth is radiant with a splendour compared with which Solomon in all his glory is a tawdry show. At first it would appear, I think, that he thought this accomplishment could be secured in his hearers by a word,¹ as of a herald who sounded a trumpet and cried, "Stand still and see in all about you and within you the glory of the Realm of God!"

But very early he betook himself to his task of revelation in other and more intimate ways. He *personated* the secret of the Kingdom and sought to convey it by a communion of his spirit with their spirits. Here lies the ultimate mode of all pervasive and fruitful teaching. The scholar graduates not so much in the pronouncement of the tutor as in his personality. Soul illuminates soul, as torch lights torch. The effective communication of spiritual realities is to be found in contagion rather than allocution. Upon this all the great interpreters of the life of man are agreed.¹ In the case of Jesus we can only describe the process by saying that he sought

¹ cf. *John* vi, 63: "The words I have uttered to you are spirit and life." By this, says Wendt (*Teaching of Jesus*, I, p. 244), he means that his words are the approach to Life.

¹ cf. Aristotle on "Friendship." And many such deliverances as the following could be gathered from all quarters: "A moral idea!—that is, a set of familiar facts thoroughly grasped and realized in a point of view which makes them a leading interest in life—that is a hard thing to communicate. Contagion is always communicating moral ideas; and contagion, perhaps, after all said and done, remains the only certain way."—(Bosanquet, in *Ethics and Religion*, p. 226); "Ideas, divorced from personal lives in which they are embodied and events through which these persons reveal what is in them, remain frail, shadowy, impotent." (H. R. Mackintosh: *The Divine Initiative*, p. 49); See also Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 351, 405 f.; cf. also, J. H. Muirhead: *Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1908, p. 356—"I do feel that neither art nor music nor morals nor the Bible nor any study in itself *gives* a constructive idea to a boy or girl. I tend more and more to feel that that comes from personality."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

to *give himself* to others. He sought to enter within their souls, and he desired their entrance within his soul, with a passion of desire which tried to utter itself in the awful terms of the most primitive of all sacraments: let them eat his flesh, he cried, and drink his blood (John vi, 53 ff.). Again, he offered them, with sacramental intensity, a baptism of his spirit which would be to them as a spring of water welling up within them to eternal life (John iv, 14). In reality, the secret once known gave life and opened the Kingdom; it was life. The spirit of Jesus was itself life; and so he made bold to call himself "the life," the content of that which he pronounced to be the purpose of his mission. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x, 10).

§ 2. *Jesus and his engagement with Evil.*

Even in this momentous essay, however, as in his preliminary evangelism, he sensed and recognized a baulk in the souls of men which more and more grew upon his attention and finally absorbed his mission. That was the blindness and perversity which is called Sin. He passed from those Eden-like levels, on which his own spirit moved as in a paradise regained, and to which he considered he had only to invite his fellows to open their eyes in order to join him in his felicity—from these he passed into the valley of the shadow of Sin, whence blinding and poisonous humours had spread upon the native simplicity and innocence of mankind. The impression, I think, is unavoidable that the recognition and estimate of the presence and power of evil bore upon the attention of Jesus with increasing importance and gravity. His estimate of it deepened and darkened. He

EVIL

advanced, with a certain bewilderment at the first, and subsequently with an apprehension of its appalling establishment and tenacity in the human heart that was not altogether free from despair, into the abyss of this perversity of the soul; and here more and more he recognized that an initial deliverance had to be wrought before *Piety* could be recovered among men.

His puzzlement at it does not encourage us to hope that we can detect either its origin or inherent nature. We do not know the origin of sin.¹ And yet I should have liked to pause, but our present programme does not permit of it, to enquire as to whether we might not pursue such a search, with some hope of enlightenment, along the line of that differentiation of *Piety*, and its attendances, with which we were formerly engaged. So soon as that disintegration got under way, and that exaggerated and isolating interest in each of the spiritualities developed, which was ideally to be expected and historically came to pass, man's nature went out of gear: a *denouement*, which entailed more than mere defectiveness in attainment, or than that coming-short by which sin is interpreted as merely a "missing of the mark."

Be that as it may, Jesus came with painful recognition to see, in the blindness of men to the vision which he thought so obvious to his own eyes, and in their stubborn indifference to his message and maieutic of that *Piety* which was theirs ancestrally, the symptoms of a perversity which baffled him, and which ever more intimately engaged that questing spirit of his which was prepared for any sacrifice, if only he could bring back mankind to their native heritage. For

¹ See Denney: *Studies in Theology*, p. 479—"The plain truth, and we have no reason to hide it, is that we do not know the beginnings of man's life, of his history, of his sin."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

a time—until such time as his death completed—he diverted his soul to the central burden of human sin. There almost seems to fade from his countenance that sunshine which at the first was identical with the brightness and charm of flowers and the light that dwells in the eyes of children and of all who love with simple hearts. But it is never altogether darkened. It floods his intercourse with the men and women and children who, as on a rustic festival, attended him on the path of palms to Jerusalem; and it falls upon the spikenard of her who anointed him, so that the fragrance thereof steals abroad as from a garden of love. Even so, his bearing now is that of one who turns almost hastily from these renewals of a hope in his heart which he had meantime postponed.

We shall not of course conclude that the presence and power of evil in the world was no real concern of his in the earlier part of his ministry. He himself felt the wind of the pinions of evil upon his own soul, as we learn from that intimate drama of his contest with himself which is called the Temptation (Matt. iv, 1 ff.). And certainly he emerged at the outset with a summons to Repentance on his lips. But the note of that cry is not in the key of John the Baptist's. "In the teaching of Jesus," writes W. P. Paterson, "faith and repentance were commonly joined together as the conditions of entrance into the Kingdom. . . . But the greatest promises were made to faith."¹ By faith we understand the child-like attitude of open-eyed response and simple-hearted trust which lies at the heart of *Piety*. This, rather than an alarmist repentance, was the characteristic note of his early

¹ W. P. Paterson: *The Nature of Religion*, p. 408. See also, Bousset: *Jesus*, pp. 58 f

JESUS AS REDEEMER

evangelism. But, as his princely embassy developed he detected with tragical concern how few they were who had aught of "the ear to hear" it. The massive weight and subtlety of Sin disclosed itself to him; and the conviction came to possess his soul that this awful oppression must first be dispelled, or discharged, before his mission of the radiant reality of the native divinity of nature and life could be continued and carried through, and that, in some momentous way, he was the one upon whom that stupendous task devolved.

§§ (1) *His recognition of himself as Redeemer.*

How this conviction came to possess him is past finding out. But (1) we may not be altogether astray if we reflect on that mood of heroic fatalism which, in our survey of the personality of Jesus in *Mark*, we discerned as a quality of the spirit of the great martyrs for truth and righteousness (pp. 64 f.) . . . Again (2) we do well to surmise that that conception and plea of the banishment of the dread heritage of evil by the suffering and oblation of certain upon whom the consecration of sacrifice had come as an anointing, which sounded with increasing certainty and plaintive ardour through the loftier prophecies of his nation, caught the questioning soul of Jesus and fired his imagination with fearful decisiveness. And (3) this he was led, by that deeper significance of the messianic purpose which was so greatly overlaid by the feverish patriotism of his own age, to identify with his own particular function as the one destined to bring back man into the Kingdom of the heaven that lay awaiting them in the earth. And (4) we may add this, that he who offered himself, not only as the announcer, but as the communication, by means of the sharing of his

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

soul with his fellows, of the restorative spirit we have summed up as *Piety*, could make but little headway if, in his address to his fellows, he was as one who stood aside from anything that concerned their experience, and, least of all, from the consciousness of the woe that was theirs through Sin, and from the utmost tragedy of Sin's consequence. Sympathy is not enough in such an enterprise, however understanding and affectionate that may be. Here, as in that early, sunny labour of love in which he thought to bring them, as in a pastoral revival, to the ancestral hills and pastures of the Realm of God, he had to do more than *beckon* them; he had to *identify* himself with them; nay, he had to *be* them.

I would humbly submit that out of these hints, that aim at touching the necessity of his death, there may be given us a glimpse of its significance. The death of this unexampled martyr, the Son of Man, has a significance that faces the great objective fact of Sin's prevalence and empire in the world. Again, it had, and has, a consummating significance for the Son of Man himself. Permit me to attempt a description of these vast implications.

§§ (2) *His cancelling of Sin.*

On the one hand, the death of Jesus was the fateful fulfilment of a mysterious operation with an objective reference to the world. It broke the power of Evil once and for all. And how did it accomplish this? A dozen theories clamour about us to answer that question. It is with no intolerance or conceit I set these aside, but simply that my space cannot find room for their enumeration and survey. In the end however, I think I should come back to say simply that in the death of Jesus, as I stand on the

THE CANCELLING OF SIN

trampled grass beneath that monstrous cross and look, I see and feel and know, I am stricken and awed and inspired with the revelation, that Evil at its most fell assault and tidal surge is broken there, falters and lapses in impotence. I am unequal to the exhibition of this conviction. But this, at least, I can say of what I see: There, that one is being done to death, who was the purest and loveliest of the children of men, in whose soul was no guile or shadow of injustice, and no malice in his mouth. His touch had healing in it; his look was as the light and ardour of the sun; his robe trailed mercy through the streets. He bore the impress of so majestic and yet homely an origin and dignity that plain men were constrained to kneel before him as to a god, and yet could lean their head upon his breast as they reclined at supper. Against this reflection of what God must be, or else be seated in contempt or levity to view the native intuitions of the human heart, there massed itself the bloody-minded antagonism of a people who possessed the nearest insight into the mind and messages of God known anywhere among men; and this was arrayed and led by the chief of their nobles and priests. They plotted and lied against him to accomplish his end. They gave false witness, they used political trickery, they prostituted the laws of God to bring forth his death. They clamoured, as a favour from those whom they hated with a perfect hatred, to have a murderous robber restored to their commonwealth, rather than to allow this shining spirit to escape the gallows. They outraged him with dreadful indignities, and hanged him, shooting insults at his tortures and jesting at the contortions of his white body. It looks like defeat. The twisted body becomes rigorous,

p 400

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

the breast heaves as though to burst asunder, the head droops, the breath gasps, a long shriek pierces the sudden silence of the people, and he gives up the ghost. But who that is not bereft of the soul which discerns, however hazily, the battle that has been waged unseen behind that array of spears and that dead thing in its blood, can fail to see where and whose the triumph is? On the one part they may shout aloud and proclaim him dead, done with, and dispatched. But in little phrases that steal from those blue lips—a prayer that God the Father might forgive them, for they know not what they do; a promise to him who died beside him, that that very day he would be with him in paradise; a declaration that *It* was finished; a report to his Father that he was dying content—in these phrases there steals abroad on the soul of him that hath an ear to hear, a proclamation of victory more vehement than all the trumpets of hell. Here Evil at a pitch of mounted virulence and hate such as could not be imagined, had it not thus attained its height, is conquered.

But how shall we think of it when we recognize that Evil at its utmost has actually been so confronted by this pre-eminent soul among the children of men, that it went down before him? Can the world ever be the same again after this? Does it signify nothing for the race of men to know for surety that all that the Evil that had grown like an insidious cancer throughout humankind, could muster against the divine in man, fell before this Cross, smitten, foiled, baffled, beaten? Does it mean nothing that they who despair of the war they wage with Sin, now know, from that day and its deed, that the victory can be won, for it has been won? But is that all it signifies? Not so. Not so, at least, if the virtue of this Son

THE POWER OF HIS DEATH

of Man is available for others in a further fashion than is offered in one of whom we may say no more than this, that he is a heartening exemplar by whose deed we may take courage in our own poor, solitary combats. But he is more than that. At any rate, men like Paul the Pharisee, the self-sufficient monadist of the Law, and John the cousin of Philo and Plato, discerned in him more than that. With something of their vision we may see Jesus in his death completing that identification of his soul with the souls of all who ever "came" to him, whereby, in the Galilean and Judæan days, he shared their very life and imparted his own to them, in a communion so intimate that he spoke of it as the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood. It was such an identification with them in their sin that brought about his death. When, therefore, he triumphed in his death, the knell of sin was struck for them. And not for these alone; not alone, that is, for those whose names might be inscribed in a roll of them that had touched his communicating hands or the tassel of his robe. Mankind is not anywhere a congeries of monadic personalities; no man anywhere liveth or dieth to himself; the race is *one*. The effect of the death of Jesus is no more to be limited to those who like Nicodemus had conferred with him face to face about spiritual things, than is the power of his "blood" to be confined to those upon whom the dread drops fell from the tree of crucifixion. Throughout mankind the power of his death in breaking the domination of Sin is not to be measured by the quantity of it but by the quality of it. When Jesus died in triumph, Sin in the race was stricken at the heart of its empire; a deed was done that crippled its might everywhere. Men, who have never heard of Jesus, have only to be set

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

before the Cross, and left to look, and to brood, and to suffer their souls to respond to it, to recognize that this victory had been achieved for them as surely as for St. John and the blessed women whose ministering hands were stained with his blood. Therefore it is possible for all men everywhere to be delivered from the might and despair of Sin. That has happened in the history of mankind which relaxed its fell clutch and broke its power. The freedom is *there*; it is open to all and its virtue awaits their recognition of it. Whensoever a man, by a recognition of it, in which salutation of that accomplished deed is pervaded by wonder, gratitude, love and surrender, bows before the fact of it, he is made partaker of the redemption wrought for him and in him.

§§ (3) *The renewal of his mission of "Piety."*

And now the way is open for that inspiration of a man's soul which is described by the first interpreters of the work of Christ as a "sanctification" that follows upon "justification." This we shall now interpret to ourselves as the resumption on the part of Jesus of his revival of *Piety* in the souls of men. Objectively that barrier is now down which, in the course of the mission that seemed to decline so tragically from its springlike beginning in Galilee, concerned him with startling and increasing importance. Subjectively, that is, in his own spirit, he was now perfected by all he had suffered (Heb. v, 9), having been made one with all that was involved in human experience. There was no alternative for him between an engagement with mankind, in which an unsullied and "sinless" soul shines momentarily upon his fellows and then withdraws, leaving them wondering, and possibly envious of the lovely apparition, but in

MIDDLETON MURRY

the end unaffected by it as by something which was really not of their breed or kin, and an engagement with mankind which became soul of their soul, and identified itself with their utmost sinfulness. As it now is, man knows that he is being summoned to enter the Kingdom by one who calls to them, not from a peak in paradise, fenced off from fallen human nature, but from a grave in which the herald himself has savoured the last of human woes and has vanquished them on behalf of the whole race. Accordingly, Jesus emerged from death, equipped as never before, to resume, without let or hindrance, the arrested mission of resorting *Piety* to mankind. This is the significance of the experience and doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

§§§ (a) *Middleton Murry's view of Jesus "the Teacher" and Jesus "the Saviour."*

I should have liked at this point to try to deal adequately with that division in the mission of Jesus which Middleton Murry hardens as an irreconcilable c'eavage between Jesus the Teacher and Jesus the Saviour.¹ There is a tantalizing flavour of truth in what is thus indicated; but only enough to make Murry's theory in its outcome quite poisonously wrong!

It is quite wrong to suggest that Jesus first tried to

¹ See Middleton Murry: *The Life of Jesus*, pp. 200 f.—"After Cæsarea Philippi . . . he was no longer a teacher, but the chosen Judge of mankind. . . . We must keep distinct Jesus the Teacher and Jesus the Saviour; we must remember always that it was only because of men's blindness of soul and hardness of heart that Jesus became the Saviour. . . . These two conceptions can never be truly reconciled: for Jesus taught that the member of the Kingdom entered into an immediate relation to God. Therefore the idea that this relation should be mediated strikes at the very heart of his teaching. That Jesus himself did verily lay down his life to mediate it, that he did in fact succeed, in another way than any he had dreamed, in mediating it, does not affect the truth that he chose this path as a council of despair—a sublime *pis-aller*."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

herd men into the Kingdom with a cry, and that, disappointed therewith, he took another line altogether and sought to hoist it on a cross, as a lightning conductor for the stormy intervention of God. The cry and the cross are not alternative methods of a prophet fetching about him experimentally. They are in sequence. The cross did not grow in the field of disillusionment ; still less was its achievement one which Jesus never anticipated. I cannot away with Murry's conception of Jesus as lapsing towards the end, in his anticipations of the Kingdom, to even lower theurgic depths than those he so definitely avoided at the outset of his career in the experience called his Temptation. His bearing in his passion, at the tribunals, and in his death, betokens a deliberation of purpose which stares this theory into foolishness. In those latest episodes, and in his colloquies with his disciples on the eve of them, he evinces the mood of one who is " straitened " in anticipation of a fulfilment that will usher him into the unhindered exercise of a mission which awaits renewal. His whole soul is charged with a longing, that is almost impatient, for the completion of that dread experience, whereby he will break down the barrier that Sin had drawn across the open gateway of the Kingdom, and, further, be himself equipped in full, and in the glorious freedom of the province of the Kingdom that lies " through the veil," to advance his followers in the communion of that spirit of his which is his primary gift to the world, and which we have summed up in the word *Piety*.

§§§ (b) *His continuance with his disciples.*

I venture to say that the only touch of feverish uncertainty I can detect in his latest speeches and

CHRIST'S ABIDING PRESENCE

bearing is in the fear he had that, when he had overcome the sharpness of death, and had opened the kingdom to all believers and was at an heavenly liberty to inspire the redeemed by his spirit, his followers would lose him in the darkness of his death, and themselves be so blinded and dispersed that he should lack that point of contact with the Kingdom of God, on this side "the veil," whereby he could continue recognizably and effectually the mission of his spirit. There was ground indeed for such an apprehension. It is not given to many, and certainly not to such men as those first followers of his, to assert the fugitive conviction in the human breast which feels rebelliously but fearfully that, when heroic souls go down in tragic failure and death, "these mighty or heavenly spirits who perish are too great for the little space in which they move, and that they vanish not into nothingness but into freedom."¹

It is doubtful if the disciples of Jesus were capable even of that tenuous, although lofty, confidence. With all the solicitous preparation on the part of Jesus that they should "know" him when he emerged from the seeming disaster that awaited him, it is clear from the records we possess that their recognition of him was not altogether readily achieved. It was, indeed, secured; they were incontrovertibly assured that they had "seen the Lord." But the assurance succeeded upon what can only be called several experimentations on the part of Jesus; and, even so, there were some that "were in doubt" at the close of the series (Matt. xxviii, 17).

We have reason to know why this continuing contact with his disciples on the part of Jesus in the

¹ A. C. Bradley: *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 38.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

continuance of his mission was necessary. He required more than repositories of recollections of a transient exemplar of a life, as of Eden, that had appeared on the Galilean hills and went out, however heroically, on a gallows near Jerusalem. He needed them, not as his memory among men, or as his memorial, but as his *mediation*, that is to say, the means by which he could still be recognizable in the world and extend afield, even to the uttermost parts of the earth, his restorative presence.

§§§ (c) *His need of a "Fellowship" : the significance of the Lord's Supper.*

Further, it was by these men as bound to him, not merely individually, but as a *fellowship*, that he purposed to maintain and extend his mission. This is the ultimate significance of the Supper he instituted among them. He instructed them to continue that poignant rite, not as men who might thus keep from oblivion the recollection of a lost leader ; but that, as they took the bread and cup (" my body and blood ") and ate and drank of these, they might know indeed that they were partakers of his very being, they were his body, and the demonstration of his abiding presence in, and unto, the world. The Fellowship, in all its manifestations, was the Body of Christ ; but in that rite of bread and wine, their embodiment of his spirit was renewed as though they had made themselves one again with him by eating his flesh and drinking his blood ; with profoundest reverence, love and awe, they anew " discerned " themselves as " the Lord's Body " (I. Cor. xi, 29),¹ and thus recovered for Christ the channel whereby he was engaged in securing the world to that vision of the unity of all

¹ See Deissmann : *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, p. 254.

THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST

things in truth, beauty, awe and goodness which is *Piety*.

§§§ (d) *The "Church" as the veritable Body of Christ.*

This Fellowship is the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ, not merely as in a figure, but as that wherein the invisible and persevering Lord abides incarnate and issues to the world in the communication of his spirit. The Church is not simply a society for the encouragement of those who think it fitting and helpful that they should construct articles of union among them, to the end that they may the better remember and reverence one of whom antique histories have informed them; nor is it a society simply for mutual aid in morality; nor is it the organized propaganda of a good news of redemption wrought in the past, once and for all, upon an eastern hill; nor is it a convenience whereby men may best fulfil their engagement in worshipping that Father-God of whom a prophet spake in Galilee long ago. The Church involves all these and the like implications. But the Church is a deeper and ampler society than these indicate, even if conjoined with one another. It is truly a supernatural society; it is the embodiment of the invisible but world-abiding Christ. It is the only complete means by which the individual came, in the earliest Christian age, into communion with his living Lord. Even Paul so came. Weinel, in his radical interpretation of the manner of Paul's conversion,¹ is right to this extent, that by the testimony of the first martyrs, their bearing and the spirit that inspired it, Paul passed the threshold that gave upon his superlative vision. Since that age,

¹ See Weinel: *St. Paul*, pp. 80 ff.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

it might seem that men have attained communion with Christ by the devout perusal of the vivid portraiture of him presented in the Gospels. These indeed make a man wise unto salvation. But it is in the *fellowship* of the new Israel which the Gospels offer the reader, that he becomes alive to the present reality of Christ; and, though he fall on his knees, after reading therein, and call upon the Christ, let it not be forgotten that that movement of his is prompted by memories and associations of the community of believers, in which he has ancestrally his portion, and that, if he be true to the impulse in his heart, he will seek out forthwith the *fellowship*; for only there, as he knows in the depths of his soul, can he experience in its amplitude the communion of his Lord.¹

Furthermore, it is only by incorporate continuance in the Church that the "member" abides in the full course of the inspiration communicated by Jesus among men. The Christian anchorite, even in his period of isolated independence, draws, in the recesses of his memory and imagination, from the community he seems to have deserted; and, inevitably, the solitary cells cluster together, by a native impulse, to the "laura," and to the family of Benedict in the end.

The Church, then, is the embodiment in the world of him who passed through death, liberated and equipped to continue the inspiration of mankind by that spirit which it was his mission from the first to quicken and revive in the divisive soul of man, and

¹ See Denney: *Studies in Theology*, p. 188—"I do not think the New Testament contemplates the existence of unattached Christians—persons who have accepted the Christian salvation, and embraced the Christian ideal and vocation—but who are not members of a church."—Also, H. R. Mackintosh: *The Divine Initiative*, p. 90—"Our faith sprang out of the Church's life." See the whole chapter. Also, Moffatt: *Approach to the New Testament*, pp. 231, 234.

THE CHURCH AND THE SPIRIT

which is that *Piety* whereof we have sought to detect and describe the history, or, at least, the significance. The furtherance of this mission is the abiding function of the Church and its superlative and all-pervasive contribution to the restoration of the world to that condition of innocence, peace, and a family life of all things in God, which is the Kingdom of God.

§ 3. *The Church as the channel of the transfiguring Spirit of Christ.*

It is obvious that that further enquiry, to which the argument of this book leads, and of which I am giving no more at present than an abrupt and superficial summary, would now be led to engage with the following question : Can we say that the Church, or Fellowship of believers in incorporated communion with Christ, has proved itself to be the instrument whereby *Piety* has been, or is in process of being, restored and revived in the world ?

I can only indicate the line that should be taken in an endeavour to answer that question in the affirmative. It is clear, from what has already engaged us in our quest, that the answer required must seek to show that from the Fellowship of believing, saved and "sanctified" people, incorporated in the living, abiding and contemporary Christ (which is the Church), a spirit has issued upon man, which, in and throughout his various spiritualities, has restored to him that unitive disposition towards nature, God, and man, from which these diverged, of necessity indeed, but with attendant perils which might become, and did become, disadvantageous and even disastrous, as separate and separated reactions to Reality. That is to say, we should pursue the question through the influence of the Church upon morality, art, philosophy

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

and religion, and seek to determine whether that influence was of that conciliatory and transfiguring character which, as I indicate, I claim for it.

§§ (1) *The transfiguration of Morality.*

In the first instance, we might proceed in the realm of Morality to show without great difficulty that transfiguration which has been described above. The Spirit of Christ, operative in his Fellowship, laid hold upon the moral life in that specialized, and, in great measure, isolated interest which it had become in the world, and restored its forgotten or neglected inherence in the unity of the human soul. We have already noted this in the new radiance which the cardinal virtues assumed as faith, hope and love. We shall miss entirely the significance of that enhancement, if we regard "these three" as simply the antique virtues raised to a more extensive connotation, or flavoured with a new enthusiasm. We shall be nearer the mark if we describe them now as moral values that have been infused with beauty and truth and reverence, that is to say, as virtues that are no longer moral only, but attitudes throughout of an æsthetical, intellectual and religious nature. Certain of our great poets have partly detected this with happy insight.¹ Of this, and of the demonstration of this in the lives of characteristic indwellers in the Spirit of Christ, I would fain write fully. But here I must desist, even at the risk of appearing merely

¹ cf. Shelley (in "A Defence of Poetry")—"The great secret of morals is Love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. . . . The great instrument of moral good is the imagination." This, I think, is an adumbration, at least, of *Piety*. Take, as supplementary of that, what Keats writes (Letter of Nov. 22, 1817)—"I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the heart's affections, and the truth of imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth."

MORALITY AND ART TRANSFIGURED

assertive and dogmatic. Goodness in such is a thing of beauty. Further, it is the naked manifestation of that "commonsense" which lies inspirationally at the heart of Science. And it carries in its breast that reverence for the mysteries of personality which, whether the personality be human or divine, is religious in its essence.¹

§§ (2) *The transfiguration of Art.*

We should, in the second instance, pass to consider Art in this connection. Streeter has roundly declared that "no amount of special pleading will make it plausible to maintain that . . . Art owes as much to Jesus as to . . . Praxiteles."² The line of vision here is distorted. Certainly Jesus founded no *school* of Art; but he transfigured Art. To Streeter it has been retorted, "Why is there a deeper beauty to be found in the great works of Art in modern Europe than can be found in the Art of ancient Greece? It is *not* special pleading to say that in all that concerns this deeper beauty Art owes far more to Jesus than to the sculptors of Greece."³ The truth of the matter lies in the direction of that phrase "a deeper beauty"; and the author, from whom I quote it, has done much in his delightful book to disclose its significance. It must not be taken to denote that Art advanced merely in æsthetical apprehension and quality through the operation of the Spirit of Jesus. His was a larger inspiration. But even in the immediate æsthetical

¹ cf. Strong: *Religion, Philosophy and History*, p. 55—"In one aspect of it morality is a name for that relation between God and man from which the whole scheme of thought starts." And cf. Denney: *op. cit.*, pp. 183 f.—"A church . . . is inspired by reciprocal action springing from the law of love. It is not only religious, but ethical; though, since Jesus lived, that distinction has lost its validity."

² Streeter: *Reality*, p. 201.

³ J. Robertson Cameron: *Jesus and Art*, p. 148.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

field the influence of Jesus has been directly creative and fruitful. We have sufficiently detected the quality if the "poet" in him; that did not go to seed in after days. The Art that issued from the Christian society in course of time has a confluence of origins; but the channel in which the lovely stream flowed is hollowed by the impact of Jesus on the world.

It has taken a long time to rid men of the notion that, at the first, Christianity was inimical to art. Even so just an interpreter of the Christian spring-time as Westcott continues the faulty tradition.¹ But the requisite correction is now well established. It is justly contended that even in the specific field of artistic subjects and their exhibition, Christianity has produced results before which Greece herself bows. In sculpture, "only the finest Greek sculpture, and no Græco-Roman sculpture at all, can be put in the same rank as that of Chartres or Reims, of Giovanni, Pisano, or Donatello or Michelangelo. . . . The range is much wider, much freer, and more varied than that of Greece; the types are not less universal, as is sometimes said, but less abstract, and more human."² Christian art has characteristics which are *sui generis*, "the free and exuberant variety of its ornaments, its naturalism, inventiveness, delicacy, romance, its aspiring intellect, and genius for progress and invention."³ In its painting, "there is a depth of humanity which the pagan art of Europe had not known." In its development of music, "it is true to say, as does Wagner, that 'the only music, which, now at least, we can place on the same footing as the

¹ See his Appendix on "The Relation of Christianity to Art" in his *The Epistles of St. John*.

² Percy Dearmer: Essay on "Christianity and Art," in *The Necessity of Art*, p. 63.

³ Dearmer: *ut sup.*, p. 71.

ART TRANSFIGURED

other arts, is an exclusive product of Christianity'.¹

We shall miss the significance of all this, however, if we do not detect that here we have more than a mere æsthetical development. The genius of what is called Christian art lies in a suffusion of it by a spirit in which moral, intellectual and religious elements are significantly present, exercising one influence in the apprehension of the field of art and in its portrayal. Dearmer has done much to make this manifest. He would say nothing "to disparage the noble beauty of the work of men's hands in earlier ages or under other civilizations"; but he considers he has shown "that in Christendom something has been added to art—something indescribably precious. An enhanced skill and science indeed, an extended field of expression, and many inventions, but also a transcendal power—the sense that a man's reach must exceed his grasp, and that all beauty has an eternal meaning; and besides this, a love of natural and human things, not a mere selection of types, as in classical art, but an understanding of ordinary people—of publicans and sinners, of the lilies, and the grass, and the sparrows, which seems to be the mind of Christ himself."² Here we touch the quick of the matter. The Spirit of Christ is indeed the source of this transfiguration of art, in which man's thought, and his moral, his religious, and æsthetical engagements with nature and life, constitute one movement. This is the operation in art of that *Piety* which is his continuing inspiration of men, and which is mediated in the world by those in the communion he maintains in his Fellowship. Had I space, we should proceed

¹ Duncan-Jones : in *The Necessity of Art*, p. 92.

² Dearmer : Essay on "Christianity and Art," in *The Necessity of Art* p. 73.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

to consider that in so far as the force of that communion operates or is abated, art, as we now recognize it, flourishes or declines ; and I should have liked to illustrate the theme by an analysis of typical instances, and, in particular, by an attempt to explore the significance of such a picture as Millet's " Angelus." But we must set all this aside, and pass on to regard, in as cursory a fashion again, the invasion of the remaining spiritualities by that which the fellowship of Christ continues to conduct, namely, thought and religion.

§§ (3) *The transfiguration of Thought.*

I hesitate, because of the limits set to a mere synopsis, to indicate the line I would take to support the contention that the *Piety* which Jesus restored to mankind fulfils its part in the transfiguration of Thought. There confronts us the whole question, a profound and extensive one, of the relation of philosophy to Christianity in its theological and metaphysical bearings. I can do no more than touch upon this.

The whole field of debate requires a survey from a different point of view than that usually adopted. It is beside the mark to picture Christianity driving ahead in the world in virtue of its ethical purity and enthusiasm, or, as some would have it, by the attractiveness of its new "mystery," but, on its intellectual side, lying open and defenceless to the philosophers, and content to borrow gratefully from them such theories of the world as were convenient for filling up the gap. On the side of Thought, the new force was as vital and pervasive as on any other. Therein it was charged with an impulse, and it issued in a transforming influence, as significant as in those

THOUGHT TRANSFIGURED

others. Truly, Christianity has often *borrowed* from the philosophies, and, as I shall note presently, has paid a price for that; but its primitive movement was an approach to them whereby it would possess them, by way of revealing their full significance and of permeating them with that unitive spirit which constituted it. In so doing it was exercising its inherent function. Already in *John* and in *Paul* we witness the process in action. In *Alexandria*, the city of *Clement* and *Origen*, it evinced a great attainment, in philosophical achievements which have suffered an entirely unmerited neglect at the hands of the creators and the conventional exhibitors of "systems." The motive of those great thinkers was that of minds which came at the Thought of their age, not as men begging intellectual assistance in buttressing their religion, not as men who sought to undermine and destroy the philosophy of paganism, but as those who, by the spirit that possessed them, were equipped to enlarge the Thought of their fellows in its due proportions, and to suffuse it with the transfiguring soul of their master. This was something more than "assimilating the spiritual philosophy of Platonism, as well as the moral discipline which the later Platonists had taken over from the Stoics."¹ The assimilation proceeded by way of an enthusiastic invasion of the normal philosophy and an interpretation and enhancement of it which informed philosophy with that re-creative Spirit wherein the concerns of morality, art and religion are one address to nature and life.

It is notorious, of course, that by many of the Christian teachers in the formative period of the Faith, the current philosophies were held at arm's

¹ Inge: *Outspoken Essays* (2nd series), p. 45.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

length, and regarded suspiciously as alien dangers, or intolerantly as inferior wisdoms. This was the case in particular in the "North African school." It was otherwise, as we noted, in that golden age of Christian thought which bloomed in Alexandria. But while, in that region, the proper engagement of Christianity with philosophy flowered thus admirably for a time, in other places, and in course of time, the process was imperfectly maintained and, indeed, withered. There were two main causes of this. The gentile philosophies, dignified by names that had become deified in the world, did not readily yield to the Christian pervasion. They opposed the prestige of centuries to this new enthusiasm, and sought successfully to maintain their own self-sufficiency. They could not remain altogether unaffected by the Christian enlightenment, but such assimilations of it as they permitted did not greatly disturb their independence. A faltering Christianity was now satisfied to achieve alliance with them, in the waning vitality of the pristine motive of the Fellowship, borrowing system of them, and finding in them a convenient adjunct of its spiritual wisdom. Again, such philosophies as were thus approved and commended, as serviceable parallels or metaphysical horizons to Christian belief, came to be identified with particular institutional forms of the Fellowship, as, for example, the Church of Rome, and subservience to them came to be regarded as of the essence of orthodoxy.

Thus Christianity was diverted, in the province of Thought, from its function of pervading, by means of its transfiguring spirit, all such philosophies as mankind, in the exercise of intellectual liberty, had conceived, and took shape as the guardian and jealous

THE REFORMATION

sponsor of certain systems, and so was denied its native mission in that field. History grows dark, as the centuries pass, with the intellectual gloom that issued from this misdirection of the Christian spirit. In the 16th century the perversion was rudely shaken. There occurred then a revival, as of the first age of the Faith, of the primitive conception and experience of the Fellowship, with its immediate sense of the presence and mission of the living Christ. The choking mechanism with which the imperial Church had gone far to sterilize the pentecostal vision of the personality and purpose of Christ incarnate in the Fellowship of the "priesthood of all believers," fell to pieces, and the mind of man was delivered to seek truth fearlessly. Thought was liberated. Here was a new beginning, the dawn of an age in which philosophy might move about its task untrammelled by institutional censorships, and in which the recovered *Piety* of the early age might wait upon the theories of the schools with its transfiguring spirit. But, with all the amazing accomplishment of the Reformation, the promise it gave of a real victory hesitated and gave way. Forms of ecclesiastical polity came to possess the delivered lands, which were content to renew, with wholesome modifications, be it admitted, the mechanisms of the institution from which escape had been effected, and which were content to re-establish as tests of orthodoxy such philosophy as that institution had borrowed and erected as truth second only to the primary revelation of the Faith.

This had dire results in the field of Thought, both in respect of philosophical enquiry itself, and in respect of the mission of the Spirit of Christ in that field. The philosopher, apprehensive of all Inquisitions, sought a wisdom wherewith to explain

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

reality, apart from the household of the Faith, and the institutional Church watched him go, and regarded his labours with suspicion, fear and perplexity.

We are still affected by the atmosphere of that controversy and alienation. But, in spite of current quarrels about monkeys and monkery, a welcome change of climate is upon us. On the one hand, this may be discerned in all that is implied by the appeal of the Christian teachers to "experience." On the other hand (and with this we are more particularly concerned) philosophy is becoming increasingly aware that not by merely intellectual surveys and interpretations can we hope to achieve a world-view that shall do justice to the plenitude of reality. I need not offer illustrations of this; I have already indicated signs of it (cf. p. 362 f.).¹

I make bold to say that the author of such a synthesis is to be looked for among those who are nurtured in that insight into reality which Jesus had, and which he continues to communicate to those who breathe his spirit in that Fellowship of his which is his Body. It is not to be expected of him that he shall emerge arrayed in a philosophy that is independent of the great philosophies current among men. It is his part as a disciple of Jesus to recognize gratefully what these provide, as the tested and enduring interpretations of the world. "In the main," declares Bosanquet of philosophical enquiry, "the work has been done"; and another says very truly that "the history of philosophy lends no countenance to the idea that there is no central body of philosophical thought which has become humanity's possession."² Our philosopher will move into that tradition with a

¹ cf. A. E. Taylor: in Essay, "Philosophy" in *Recent Developments in European Thought* (edited by F. S. Marvin), p. 26.

² F. W. Butler: *Christianity and History*, p. 50.

RELIGION TRANSFIGURED

spirit invested and quick with that interfused appreciation of the four "values," without the due recognition of which, in proper emphasis and unity, all world-views must remain partial and defective.¹

Taylor looks with a certain wistfulness for the emergence of the philosopher for whom this need is proclaimed, in one who shall revive and readjust the philosophy of that great servant of Jesus, St. Thomas Aquinas.² In reality there are signs that what is actually needed is not altogether remote from us. In this I am thinking of the kind of philosophical engagement that children of the Fellowship like Gore, Inge, Matthews, and others pursue. But I must leave alone the attempt I would fain make to explain and establish those references. Such minds are equipped with knowledge of what Thought has attained, and they are qualified by the unitive Spirit of Christ to bring it "within the Kingdom."

§§ (4) *The transfiguration of Religion.*

I shall now attempt an outline of the operation in the field of Religion of the new inspiration that appeared in the world in Jesus, both in the proclamation of his achievement against evil, and in that restorative function which his Spirit exercised through the Fellowship in which he continued, and continues, incarnate.

Christianity, I venture to hold, may be taken to stand for what has been described or indicated in the preceding sentence. Christianity is more than that which is properly understood as "religion." Again, and even more definitely, Christianity is something more than a religion. It emerged not as a cult

¹ See A. E. Taylor: *ut sup.*, p. 47.

² A. E. Taylor: *ut sup.*, pp. 50 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

in rivalry towards other cults, with doctrines, rites, organizations, and communal devotions, arrayed and compacted for the purpose of ousting others already in possession of the field ; its motive and enterprise were otherwise. Here, as in the other spiritualities, it invaded religion with the motive of transfiguring it, with a spirit which adjusted the particular address of religion towards reality to that spiritual "wholeness" we have called *Piety*. Accordingly, it came upon religion as that obtained among men in the same fashion as it came upon their morality, art, and thought. It came not for subjugation but for suffusion.¹ When loyal to its proper motive, it was satisfied to recognize the existent religions in so far as these might prove tractable to its inherent spirit. Such elements in these as could not be transfigured it sloughed from them ; but such as could be, it was content they should abide, thus re-created.

Therefore, the old controversy as to the judaizing or paganizing of Christianity must be dealt with from a different point of view than is only too customary. We shall look narrowly upon those historical interpretations which picture Christianity as a virgin belief about God and man and a quaker-like cult, not only falling foul of the corrupt confusion of religion and morality of the first century, but gradually becoming contaminated by these, in appreciable stages of weakness and decline from its pristine vigour and innocence.² It is only too true that, in certain quarters and periods, the religions that occupied the hearts and hands of mankind proved more than stubborn in their contact with the pervasive power of Christianity, and reacted on the Christian movement victoriously.

¹ See Sydney Cave : in *The Future of Christianity*, pp. 23 f.

² See Inge : Essay on " Religion " in *The Legacy of Greece*, pp. 32, 35.

THE "WAY"

But this occurred, and it continues to occur, only when the native impulse of the Christian "Way" faltered. It has often faltered. And it falters when one, or other, or all, of its constituents wane in the heart of the Fellowship. We have detected those constituents. They are these: a proclamation, wherewith the Fellowship is entrusted and charged, that by the Death of Christ, whose career of triumphant meekness, heavenly beneficence, and creative teaching, they could and did relate and proclaim, the power of evil in the world was broken, and all who saluted this accomplishment in a certain way were redeemed from sin and its consequence; the assurance and vital experience they had, in the Fellowship, of their Saviour's presence and the inspiration and transfiguring quality of his Spirit; and that consummate identification of themselves as the Body of Christ which is secured in the supernatural rite called the Lord's Supper. Of these ultimate verities and experiences of the "Way," the Fellowship's salutation and practice frequently weakened and frayed. It is so still.¹ When this occurred, the inherent function of the Christian spirit faltered, and the cults it had engaged with, to permeate and transfigure them, revived in their native modes of thought, conduct and ritual, and sought to conform Christianity to themselves. Christianity was other than a religion compact and intolerant as was Mohammedanism, which offered to them, among whom it went in subjugative aggression, acceptance or abolition. It was not a sword, but a lamp. Christianity was a pentecostal effulgence; and so long as it was allowed to

¹ See Heiler: *The Spirit of Worship*, p. 28 et al.—"For us modern Christians it is difficult to grasp this primitive Christian belief in the 'present Christ' in its tremendous realism."

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

maintain itself at anything like that pitch, it took its penetrating and illustrious way throughout all the temples and groves of men. But whenever and wherever it burned low, men set it where they would, and "purg'd its faith, and trimm'd its fire" to accommodate their former religious domesticities.

Nowhere did this come to pass more calamitously than in that province of religion to which everything pointed as the most appropriate realm for the immediate activity of Christianity—the religion of the Jews. From the first, opposition here was of a stubborn character; and, in the end, even in those quarters of Jewish belief and cult in which it progressed hopefully, the impulse of Christianity was overborne. The history of these fortunes and misfortunes is a familiar one, and need not delay us.¹ Similar reactions occurred in the course of the Christian engagement with the Hellenic and Roman religions and farther afield as well. But here, in spite of reactions, the "Way" was wonderfully advanced. The reactions are most notable in those counter-interpretations of the Christian Spirit which are known as the Gnostic perversions, wherein, in general, the deed of Christ's Death is not credited with finality, and the Christian wisdom is given no higher a place than "the continuation and climax of the pagan religion of nature and the pagan mystery worship."² There was enough truth in that latter interpretation to create and prolong the trouble which half-truths always bring in their train. The truth it holds lies in the conception of Christianity as appreciative of the degree of divine revelation and redemptive worth without which no religion could prevail among men and hold their

¹ See Kurtz: *Church History*, I, pp. 98, 120 ff.

² Kurtz: *ut sup.*, p. 99.

CHRISTIANITY WINNING ITS WAY

devotion from generation to generation, and which it was the function of the Christian "Way," not to "continue," so much, or simply to verify, but by entering within it, as a new and primary motive, to transfigure and re-create it. Another field of reaction is manifest in the fortunes of Christianity in contact with the Roman religion and in other religions as well. From the imperial soul of Rome and from the cults of her farms and hearths there grew on the Tree of Christ and about the Table of his Fellowship and his chair thereat, customs and economies which, in spite of their pagan significance, came to be regarded as wood of that wood. It was against this adhering growth, at length become monstrous in its suffocating weight, that the tribes beyond the Alps rose in revolt in the 16th century.¹

But when every justice has been done to the prevalence of reactive paganism in Christianity, it falls to be said that, in spite of a Faith that often weakened and submitted, and of a continuing vitality and acquisitiveness in paganism which the Christian Spirit had difficulty in transfusing at all points, Christianity won along its way throughout the religions of the world. And what is meant by its winning its way? I answer—that which has been already described in the earlier part of this particular discourse. It invaded the religion of the Greeks, and the religions of other peoples, and transfigured these. The point I wish to make, put quite starkly, is this, that Christianity among the Hellenic peoples, and those who were, or have been, involved in their genius, is Greek religion transfigured by the proclamation

¹ See Inge: *ut sup.*, p. 37: "The Reformation was a revolt against Latin theocracy and the hereditary paganism of the Mediterranean peoples." cf. Heiler: *ut sup.*, p. 70.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

of the Cross and by the permeation of it by the Spirit of Christ and his Fellowship. And the same is true of Christianity among the Roman people, and among the Celtic and Teutonic peoples, and others as well. In each case the particular religion has been re-quickened or, rather, re-created, by that Spirit of Christ in which truth, goodness, beauty and reverence are as one movement towards God and His worship and communion. In its commerce with the religion of the Greeks, the truth that pervades the Spirit of Christ cleansed it of idolatry, and of that mythology which vexed Plato insufferably, and transformed the "mysteries" into history; the goodness of his Spirit made Greek religion ethical; that beauty which mingled with all the several modes of his *Piety*, as did each of the others in turn, and was qualified and, therefore, enhanced by goodness, truth and awe, gave a new complexion and significance to the beauty of temple and shrine; and the holiness that beat throughout his Spirit informed the Greek worship with a loftiness and infinity of wonder, combined with a domestic homeliness, which created as one of its symbols the dome above the simple table with its bread and wine within the basilica.

I shall not say that in the Greek or Orthodox Church, as it is, or ever has been, religion is seen as a perfect fusion of reverence, truth, goodness and beauty, in relation to God and the supernatural. And yet there have been times in the history of that great Church, when it was wonderfully evinced as such. And an ideal description of what obtains therein, even to-day, would go far to bear out that definition of its confession, sacraments, and moral standards.¹ But what I would say is this, that a

¹ cf. e.g. Stephen Graham : *The Way of Mary and the Way of Martha*.

THE FIELDS OF THE SPIRIT

fair-minded study of Christianity as it made its way in the Hellenic world, and as it established itself in the Greek Church, reveals therein a transfiguration of the ancient Greek religion. Therein that Greek religion is traceable and recognizable still. If we direct ourselves to discover the significance in the Greek Church of the buildings used for worship, the array of shrine and screen, of the ministerial order, of the belief and imagery of "the fall of man" and his future state, and, above all, of the mighty ritual of the Eucharist, we shall find that in these, and in other features, we are confronted with the Hellenic religion in a stage of transfiguration.¹ So impressed is Heiler with this Hellenic flavour that he is prepared to hear people object, "Is not this form of worship merely the highest and finest form of the pagan cultus? Has not something similar been constantly enacted in pre-Christian and non-Christian temples all the world over?"² He opposes all such identifications, even as I make bold to do. It is the Greek cultus; but it has encountered the Spirit of Jesus, and it has enshrined the message and operation of Christ's triumphant Death, and it has continued the central and apostolical communion with the living Christ in that pre-eminent contact with him which the Lord's Supper is and which most surely constitutes the Fellowship—all this it has done in obedience to the native purpose of Christianity in the world, namely, the transfiguration of all the religions of mankind.

I fear that this treatment of a great matter, such as I am offering thus summarily, is very light in touch

¹ See Inge: *ut sup.*, ("the clerical profession"), p. 33; ("Greek eschatology"), p. 51; ("fall of man"), pp. 33, 50 f.; ("mysteries"—"The vital religion of the empire was associated with the mystery-religions and with the discipline of the 'philosophic life.'").

² Heiler: *ut sup.*, pp. 53 f.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

and perfunctory. But it is bound to be so, apart from other causes, by the limits we have set ourselves. Even more brusque will require to be my reference to the like bearing of Christianity to the religion of the Romans, and its transfiguration. Here, likewise, we have, not another type of Christianity, but another type of religion breathed upon and re-created by the Christian Spirit. I am referring to the transformation of religion which occurred in Italy and in the kindred lands. In course of time this religion extended itself beyond the Latin boundaries and came to prevail widely there, albeit not without a vigorous opposition, which still continues, on the part of northern religions which, in times subsequent to the christening of the south, were, in their turn, invaded by the transfiguring Spirit.¹ From all this, however, I must pass with the observation that here, too, an examination of "Roman Christianity" will reveal what I have indicated above of the christening of the antique religion of the Roman people. Thus should we trace to its source the "objectivity" of the Roman Faith, the order and legalistic propriety of its pastoral activity, the importance and gravity of its morality, its confident use of the "world" and its discerning adaptation to it, the "juridical cast" of its gospel and of its liturgical texts and movements, and other features besides.²

¹ See Inge: *ut sup.*, p. 41—"Christianity in its developed form is a Mediterranean religion; in all external features it might have been very different if it had been first planted north of the Alps." cf. also p. 43 (at foot).

² See Heiler: *ut sup.*, p. 150—"The fundamental ideas with which Western religious life was occupied were . . . Sin and Grace, Law and Good Works. Western Christianity regarded God's revelation of redemption as consisting primarily in the forgiveness of sins, not, as Eastern Christianity did, in a transfiguration by which the mortal put on immortality." It must be obvious how these differences were determined by the original religious genius of these two peoples.

TRANSFIGURATION OF ALL RELIGIONS

But I must leave this alone without any proper attempt at elucidation. So, too, I may not proceed, as I would fain do, to a like consideration of the transfiguration of the religion of the Celtic peoples, as, for example, the Ireland of Finian and Columba would evince it, and of the religion of the Teutonic peoples with its wonderful distinctiveness as typified in Christian Chivalry, and in the splendour of knightliness as enshrined in Malory, and in the glory of Gothic architecture.

I draw to a close by saying again, even at the risk of being more deeply misapprehended, that there is not one Christian religion, or even a Christian religion at all in that strict sense of the term which we have already declared to ourselves. Christianity is a much more wonderful thing than any such phrases describe. Christianity is, or is prepared to be, and I venture to believe, is destined to be, the *transfiguration of all religions*. As thus transfigured, they will remain distinctive in relation to one another. Certainly they have that in them all which makes of them one Catholic Church ("wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church," said Ignatius—a proclamation that grows out of the heart of the gospels); they all live and move and have their being in the one evangel of Christ's Death, in the one assurance and experience of his presence and *Piety*, and in the one supreme identification of them as the Body of Christ, secured in the supernatural rite called the Lord's Supper. But they are distinctive and do well to remain distinctive. The gravest of all misfortunes fell upon Christianity when particular embodiments of the Spirit of Christ, established by the transfiguration of their original and basic religions, claimed to be, as did the Roman in chiefest measure, the one and

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

only legitimate type of re-created religion, and set about propagating their claim and imposing it upon others. There is no exclusive form of Christianity. All societies that live within, and by, and unto, those pristine constituents of Christianity which we have more than once noted above, are the Body of Christ. Those who truly know and abide within the Fellowship of Christ are coming more and more to recognize that the Way of Christ is not duly furthered by exporting to those whose native religion is still untouched by the transfiguring Spirit, the apparatus of theologies, "orders," and rules of faith and life, which have taken particular shape among themselves by reason of their own tribal genius and the historical development of their own religious character. The day may not be far away when the Indians and the Chinese, for example, will develop an economy of Christian belief and practice which might astonish those, like us in the West, who think and speak as though our ecclesiastical apparatus had come from Calvary as from another Sinai, but which will be as adequate a channel for the Evangel and Spirit of Christ as any we so exclusively recognize. The essentials of a religion that is Christian are the constituents already noted. All else, "orders," particular liturgies, governments aristocratic or democratic, are of subsidiary importance: important indeed, but only as the best expedients are important.

THE END

INDEX OF GOSPEL REFERENCES

Matt.	ii. 1 ff.	377	Matt.	xvi. 23	103
"	iv. 1 ff.	396	"	xvi. 25	199
"	v. 3	211	"	xvi. 26	104, 198
"	v. 3 ff.	28, 168	"	xvii. 2	262
"	v. 8	301	"	xviii. 2	139
"	v. 17	211	"	xviii. 10	298
"	v. 18 f.	69	"	xviii. 22	102
"	v. 21 ff.	146	"	xix. 8	74
"	v. 27 f.	71	"	xix. 16	164
"	v. 38	215	"	xix. 17	299
"	v. 39 f.	282	"	xix. 21	160
"	v. 45	26, 103	"	xix. 29	108, 174
"	v. 46	169	"	xx. 1 ff.	171
"	v. 48	116, 197	"	xxi. 28	102
"	vi. 1 ff.	170	"	xxi. 31	122
"	vi. 17	159	"	xxii. 37 ff.	73
"	vi. 19	123	"	xxii. 38	327
"	vi. 20	165	"	xxiii. 2	69
"	vi. 24	99	"	xxiii. 3	102
"	vi. 28	59, 134, 298, 300	"	xxiii. 23	68
"	vi. 30	300	"	xxv. 11	162
"	vi. 33	171	"	xxv. 14	106
"	vii. 7	328	"	xxv. 14 ff.	281
"	vii. 12	100, 280	"	xxvi. 26	321
"	vii. 14	148	"	xxviii. 17	405
"	vii. 26	102	"	xxviii. 18 ff.	14
"	viii. 4	69			
"	viii. 5 ff.	125, 323			
"	viii. 10	383	Mark	i. 12	24
"	ix. 10 ff.	160	"	i. 17	25
"	x. 19 f.	90	"	i. 22	25
"	x. 28	327	"	i. 27	25
"	x. 38	263	"	ii. 5	27
"	x. 39	200	"	ii. 17	28
"	xi. 12	126	"	ii. 22	28
"	xi. 16 ff.	159	"	ii. 23	30
"	xii. 1 ff.	77	"	ii. 27 ff.	77
"	xii. 33	262	"	ii. 28	31
"	xiii. 43	75	"	iii. 23	28
"	xiii. 44	106, 125, 160	"	iii. 29	89
"	xiii. 45	125	"	iii. 33 ff.	282
"	xiii. 46	160	"	iv. 3 ff.	106
"	xiv. 19	321	"	iv. 6	102
"	xv. 3	68	"	iv. 11	30
"	xv. 14	275	"	v. 28	29
"	xv. 22 ff.	383	"	v. 43	27
"	xv. 36	321	"	vi. 4	30

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Mark	vi.	11	29	Luke	xii.	10	107
"	vii.	8 ff.	68	"	xii.	13 ff.	171
"	vii.	33	29	"	xii.	19	198
"	viii.	17	29	"	xiii.	30	281
"	viii.	23	29	"	xiv.	1 ff.	77
"	viii.	29	32	"	xiv.	31	126
"	viii.	35	200	"	xv.	8	125
"	viii.	36	104	"	xv.	25 ff.	186
"	viii.	37	198, 199	"	xvi.	9	98
"	viii.	38	33	"	xvi.	19 ff.	162
"	ix.	2	32	"	xvii.	10	99
"	ix.	3	33	"	xvii.	21	117
"	ix.	19	33	"	xvii.	27	102
"	ix.	43	265	"	xviii.	18	164
"	ix.	45	265	"	xviii.	19	299
"	ix.	47	265	"	xxi.	14	90
"	x.	15	137	"	xxi.	19	198, 199
"	x.	17	164				
"	x.	29 f.	108				
"	x.	30	174, 263				
"	xi.	15	36	John	iii.	3	126
"	xi.	15 ff.	321	"	iv.	14	394
"	xii.	29	321	"	iv.	21	215
"	xii.	34	122	"	iv.	22	382
"	xiv.	6	86	"	iv.	23	215
"	xiv.	30	37	"	iv.	24	300
"	xiv.	33	37	"	iv.	34	84
"	xiv.	48	25	"	v.	39	165
"	xiv.	61	32	"	v.	45	69
"	xiv.	62	34	"	vi.	53 ff.	394
				"	vi.	54	165
				"	vi.	63	393
Luke	ii.	8 ff.	377	"	viii.	3	77
"	ii.	25 ff.	377	"	viii.	9	88
"	ii.	36 ff.	377	"	viii.	32	297
"	vi.	35	102, 170	"	ix.	6	29
"	vii.	31 ff.	159	"	ix.	41	89
"	vii.	32	75	"	x.	10	394
"	viii.	44	321	"	x.	28	165
"	viii.	55	198	"	xii.	50	265
"	ix.	25	104	"	xiv.	1 ff.	183
"	ix.	51	263	"	xiv.	2	163
"	ix.	62	107	"	xv.	19	148
"	x.	25	164	"	xvi.	13	297
"	x.	30 ff.	282	"	xvi.	21	187
"	x.	42	298	"	xvii.	19	297
"	xi.	35	103	"	xvii.	37	297

INDEX OF QUOTATIONAL REFERENCES

- Acton, 43
 Adam, 360
 Adamson, 62, 98
 Alexander, 242
 Aristotle, 9, 30, 172, 369, 393
 Arnold, 147
 Aurelius, 78

 Berkeley, 243
 Bergson, 248ff., 264, 267
 Berguet, 20, 48, 57
 Bigg, 90
 Blake, 130, 155
 Bosanquet, 59, 183, 302, 385, 393
 Bouquet, 224
 Bousset, 120, 179, 334, 359
 Bradley, A. C., 405
 Bradley, F. H., 304
 Browning, 58
 Bruce, A. B., 116
 Buchan, 184
 Burkitt, 14, 139
 Burney, 58
 Butler, 87 ff.
 Butler, F. W., 418

 Caird, E., 59, 177
 Cairns, D., 316
 Cameron, J. R., 411
 Carlyle, 178
 Carr, Wildon, 248, 249, 251, 254, 255
 Cave, 317, 420
 Chapman, 182
 Charnwood, 18
 Chesterton, 24, 25, 60, 124, 146, 184
 Cornill, 218
 Couch, Q., 55, 56, 136
 Croce, 97, 143, 234 ff., 313

 Darwin, 191, 246
 Davidson, 78, 284
 Dearmer, 386, 412, 413

 Deissmann, 15, 43, 54, 135, 300, 406
 Denney, 395, 408, 411
 Dewey, 154, 243
 Donne, 162, 233
 Dougal and Emmet, 295
 Duncan-Jones, 413
 Dunkermann, 335
 Durkheim, 318

 Earle, 138
 Edwards, M., 316, 338
 Epictetus, 9, 79, 81, 83
 Eucken, 101

 Fawcett, 144
 Figgis, 11, 20, 47, 159
 Fowler, W., 318
 Francis of Assisi, 26, 60, 174
 Franks, 330, 334, 336 f.
 Frazer, J., 315

 Galloway, 317
 Gardner, P., 42, 81, 372
 Glover, 102, 371
 Graham, Stephen, 424
 Graham, K., 181
 Green, 6, 55, 194 ff., 231, 245

 Haeckel, 305
 Haldane, 13, 178
 Hardy, 12
 Harnack, 14, 30, 39, 40, 104
 Harvey, J. W., 284
 Hatch, 7, 80
 Headlam, 86, 198
 Hegel, 329
 Heiler, 421, 423, 425, 426
 Herford, 168
 Hermann, 330
 Hobbes, 7
 Hudson, 355 f.
 Hume, 243

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF MAN

Hunkin, 50
Huxley, 385
Huxley, Julian, 305

Illingworth, 262
Inge, 21, 37, 106, 116, 158, 165,
178, 199, 203, 334, 362, 372, 380,
415, 420, 423, 425, 426

James, Wm., 155, 313
Jevons, F. B., 224
Joad, 5, 234, 241, 306
Johnston, G. A., 178, 207
Jones, Henry, 12, 56, 72, 81, 82,
84, 222, 294
Jowett, 30, 49, 135

Kant, 9, 95 ff., 140 ff., 156, 178,
329
Keats, 410
Keim, 384
King, 177
Kurtz, 422

Lake, K., 118, 121
Lake and Jackson, 51
Lamb, Mary, 182
Lang, A., 345, 347
Leibniz, 244
Livingstone, R. W., 158, 333, 371,
372
Lotze, 156, 300
Luthardt, 360

Mackenzie, 92, 101, 107, 205, 269,
303, 393
Mackintosh, H. R., 380, 393, 408
Major, 13, 265
Malinowski, 347
Marett, 346
Marriott, 139
Martineau, 303
Matthews, 135, 233, 295, 377
Maurice, 198
Mazzini, 10
Mellone, 300
Meynell, 163
Mill, 10, 153
Milligan, G., 170
Moffatt, 15, 69, 70, 86, 320, 383,
408
Montefiore, 19, 52, 53, 167, 169
Muirhead, 196, 241, 243, 246, 248,
393

Munsterberg, 335
Murray, G., 87, 343 f.
Murry, M., 149, 287 f., 403 f.

Neitzsche, 159, 163, 258, 268 ff.

Oman, 317, 320
Otto, 75, 331 ff.

Paterson, W. P., 312, 319, 396
Patmore, C., 182
Peile, 12
Perry, 350
Pfleiderer, 144, 314, 343 f., 354
Pigou, 47, 176, 295
Plato, 9, 171, 172, 225, 361, 369
Pringle-Pattison, 303

Ramsay, W. M., 348
Rashdall, H., 4, 42, 52, 101, 109,
154, 199, 242, 246, 263, 303
Renan, 39
Ribot, 145
Ritschl, 331
Rolleston, 84
Romanes, 315
Ruskin, 86
Russell, B., 5, 145, 244

Sabatier, 49, 327
Schleiermacher, 314 ff., 331, 335
Schmidt, 347
Schopenhauer, 5, 271
Schweitzer, 40
Scott, E. F., 4, 15, 42, 53, 99, 121,
378
Seeley, 83, 169
Seth, J., 65, 143, 379
Shaw, B., 5, 284
Shelley, 410
Sidgwick, 5, 157, 242, 303
Simmel, 258, 261 ff.
Smith, Alex., 67
Smith, Elliot, 350 ff.
Smyth, Newman, 5
Socrates, 9, 75, 369
Sorley, 147, 177, 300, 363, 379
Spencer, 19, 245 f.
Spinoza, 9, 19, 135
Stephen, L., 242, 301
Stevenson, R. L., 105, 180
Strachey, 56, 361
Streeter, 54, 295, 301, 372, 373,
411

INDEX OF QUOTATIONAL REFERENCES

Strong, 339, 360, 411
 Sturt, 202
 Swedenborg, 5

Taylor, A. E., 9, 418, 419
 Temple, 326, 328
 Thomson, D'A. W., 370
 Thomson, J. A., 192
 Tiele, 339, 358
 Traherne, 138
 Troeltsch, 337
 Türk, H., 148

Underhill, 48, 314

Volcott, 335

Wagner, 412
 Ward, 221 f., 247, 300, 357
 Webb, C., 103, 107, 360
 Weinell, 91, 407
 Wells, H. G., 5, 305
 Wendt, 71, 73, 268, 296, 328, 393
 Westcott, 412
 Westermarck, 242
 Whitehead, 313
 Wimmer, 181
 Wordsworth, 57, 132, 136

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